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Bernard Gilpin.

MEMORIALS

OF THE

LIFE AND MINISTRY

OF

BERNARD GILPIN, M.A.,

FORMERLY RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S, HERTFORD,

AND AFTERWARDS FOR 33 YEARS MINISTER OF PORT VALE CHAPEL.

WITH A BIOGRAPHY OF HIS FIRST WIFE

HENRIETTA.

'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth,' &c.—ECCLES. xi. 1-6.

EDITED BY HIS SON-IN-LAW

R. B. BENSON.

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PREFACE.

THE memorials of 'a good minister of Jesus Christ' must in truth be memorials of the goodness and mercy of God, when it is borne in mind what unspeakable favours the gifts of Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the word by his messengers, really are. This, then, is the design of the present volume—to commemorate the grace of God by the exhibition of the spiritual life and labours of one who was called of God and sent, who having 'freely received' did 'freely give,' and the communication of whose faith became effectual in many through the acknowledging of every good thing which was in him in Christ Jesus.

PART I commences, after a few introductory remarks, with Mr. Gilpin's own narrative of the communication of that life to him from above, and of the earlier years of his ministry; elucidated by a history of two of his parishioners, which was written by him in the same retrospect, and at about the same date, probably in the year 1837. This is followed by extracts from his diary, which mainly consists of records of many in whom he was interested. The publication of some of these records constitutes an especial feature in these memorials, adding to the testimony they contain, and showing (it is hoped) the connection which those who were the subjects of them spiritually held towards himself, in being built up with him as precious stones of that 'city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' These records, for distinction's sake, are printed in smaller type than the body of the work, and are given some of them as they occur in the diary in fragmentary notices, and some at greater length abbreviated from memoirs, into which Mr. Gilpin frequently moulded such notices after the deaths of those to whom they referred. Whether these records are longer or shorter, they have been carefully selected for this volume from the cases of those who have now passed away leaving a testimony to the genuineness of the work of God upon their

Bernard Gilpin.

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which (apart from their conscientious origin in some cases) too little stress can hardly be laid, seeing they are self-contradictory, being occasioned by the effects produced upon sensitive minds by contact on every side with conflicting errors and excesses rather than by adherence to any well-defined standard of truth.

These considerations are also in some degree applicable to many more important differences leading to diversities of practice in connection with the worship and ordinances of God; differences whose lines of distinction being frequently drawn within even the true church, occasion therein deep trial and searching of heart, especially if, in any instance, they are maintained by an interpretation of scripture not given in the scripture itself, and which by adding something to the word sets also a limit to it that the judgment of God will not establish, and which is therefore unjustly oppressive to the consciences of his people; yet differences in themselves affording no just pretext for the discord the enemy strives to sow amongst brethren on account of them: many of them (often deemed antagonistic) when rightly understood being found in harmony with truth, and the witness they unitedly bear in accordance with the whole bearing of scripture. Such differences may perhaps rightly be regarded in the light of protests in the militant church, which have been there upraised beneath the standard of the Word and Spirit in behalf of the truth, and against various errors that have arisen in opposition to it through the aggressive power of the enemy, who continually sets up his ensigns for signs; and this with so much apparent success, that the testimony of all true witnesses may for the most part even now be compared to nothing less than prophesying in sackcloth: especially as through the idolatry of the heart, ever prone to lay undue stress on things external, the spirituality of the word is often too much lost sight of, and many such protests are in consequence carried to extremes even by the people of God; and are left by his righteous judgment to fall in the hour of the church's conflict as spoil into the hands of the enemy, by whom they are fearfully perverted, and turned into weapons of destruction. This is manifest in a remarkable degree in the church of Rome, which may be said to be filled with such spoil. In how many of the acts of idolatrous worship in that church may we not trace in a carnally distorted form the semblance of one or more of the most sacred truths that are contained in the word of God, and of which his people are made

witnesses on earth! hence, partly, its awful power to deceive, and to resist and put to silence the prophesying of the witnesses of truth.

The evils that in their most aggravated form lead to this fearful result, are perceived within by all who are taught of God, and their influence is so often evident in all communions that assume any external importance, that many of the most spiritual and deeply chastened of his people are in consequence able for the present to lay hold of very little connected with external things, and find no rest except as they are enabled to enter into the sanctuary of God, and to commune with him. There they learn to revere his righteous judgment, and in the light of it to discern and stand aloof from the oppressions of the enemy, but in this they are not exclusive, they are not bigoted, they are not intolerant, they judge not hardly even of the bitternesses, still less of the conscientious differences of the tried and tempted yet the faithful people of God. Fast bound in unity with them, with them they wait for the day of redemption, knowing that when 'the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together,' when the righteousness of Zion shall 'go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth,' when the reigning power of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be established in the earth, and 'the prey of a great spoil divided,' he will appear to the joy of his waiting people; who shall then receive their reward, and the consummation of all their desires, in the complete and triumphant revelation of those sacred truths to which they have in various ways, by faith, borne witness in a cloudy and dark day, beneath the just judgments of a righteous God, and in face of the encroachments of a triumphing foe. In this day of rebuke, it is difficult to realize the hope that the Lord of hosts will thus appear, and will make manifest that his gracious eye has been upon his people, even in their scattering and divisions; but if in the glorious hour when the Lord Jesus Christ shall have brought forth judgment unto victory, and the church, purified from all errors and excesses, shall look forth 'as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners' (Song vi. 10), through infinite mercy our names are found enrolled beneath those banners, we shall realize it to our eternal joy. Then also it will be seen that the scattering and divisions that have been suffered in the church have but severed ties destined to be severed, weakened and prevented the extension of associations destined to be dissolved,

while through the deep trials thus occasioned they have called forth long-suffering and love, the exercise of which has eventually strengthened that sacred bond of unity that tried even by fire shall endure for ever.

The editor now desires to commit this work, in all the apparent weakness and the humiliation of its testimony, into the gracious hand of God, praying that it may fall as a mite into the treasury of Zion, its faults to be there forgiven, its redundencies and shortcomings passed by, and the record of its pages to the manifold grace of God honoured for his sake.

PULVERBACH, SHREWSBURY,
May 1874.

N. B. THE Letters referred to in the Preface as addressed to Mr. Gilpin by Mr. Bourne will be found in 'Life and Letters of James Bourne,' a new edition of which is now in the press.

During his lifetime Mr. Gilpin published the following:—

Memoir of the Life of Hannah Judd, 1846.
The History of Alice Shettlewood, 1846.
Brief Memoirs of Lieut. Francis Jeffreys, and E. C. Willoughby, Esq., 1847.
Narrative of Isaac Clark, 1850.
Memoir of Richard Dore, 1850.
A Sermon on the Christian ministry, 1854.
Hymns, selected from various authors (with a few never before published), intended as a supplement to Hart's hymns, 1860.
Brief Memoir of Mrs. Mary Tims, with reflections upon the Christian ministry, 1865.
Memoir of Sukey Harley (written by his sister Jane), 1867.

Since his decease his Memoir of W. L. Maydwell has also been published, and, with the two last-mentioned Memoirs and the Hymns, may be obtained from Stephen Austin & Sons, Hertford. A few copies of the earlier works, with the exception of the Narrative of Isaac Clark, are still left, and may be obtained from the Editor.

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ERRATA.

Page 6, lines 6 and 7, *for* 'the sign of infant baptism' *read* 'the sign in infant baptism.'

Page 6, lines 35 and 36, *for* 'Rector of Buntingford' *read* 'Rector of Throcking near Buntingford.'

PART I.

BIOGRAPHY

OF

BERNARD GILPIN,

INCLUDING

ACCOUNTS OF SOME TO WHOM HIS MINISTRY WAS BLEST;

ALSO OF

HIS FIRST WIFE HENRIETTA,

AND

NOTICES OF SEVERAL VERY CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THEM.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory remarks on the life and ministry of Bernard Gilpin.

BERNARD GILPIN was the fourth son of the late Rev. William Gilpin, Rector of Pulverbach, in Shropshire. His mother was a daughter of the Rev. James Farish, Vicar of Stanwix and Canon of Carlisle, and was herself maternally connected with the Gilpins; thus on both sides he was descended from a family of Norman origin, whose pedigree is traced back to about the time of the Conquest *.

Many whose names appear in this long roll were men of much repute in their day: yet do we 'spend our years as a tale that is told.' Precious is the thought that the Lord had his faithful witnesses amongst them, and the eye fixes with pleasure upon the names of any whose memory has been handed down to posterity with salvation's sweet savour attached to it. Of these may just be mentioned the venerable Bernard Gilpin, so well known as the Apostle of the North. He was Rector of Houghton-le-Spring, where he died in peace, in 1583; having, in consequence of the death of Queen Mary, narrowly escaped martyrdom. Also Dr. Richard Gilpin†, who was Rector of Greystoke, in Cumberland, in the reign of Charles the Second, and who resigned his living, in common with many other godly ministers, under the pressure of the Act of Uniformity. Dr. Richard Gilpin moreover refused the bishopric of Carlisle, as his venerable uncle had done before him. His great grandson was grandfather to the subject of these pages, who, it will thus appear, was not alone in his family in those sacrifices for conscience sake which he was led to make.

Bernard Gilpin was nearly the youngest of a numerous family, and was born January 26, 1803, at Cheam, in Surrey. There his

* In the year 1206, Richard de Gylpyn was enfeoffed in the Manor of Kentmere, Westmoreland, he being eminent in his time both in a civil and military capacity. Kentmere continued in the family till the time of Charles the First, when it was lost through its possessor adhering to the royal cause. The family crest is an arm clad in armour holding an olive branch, with the motto, *dictis factisque simplex;* which perhaps is not unworthy of notice here on account of its suitability to several members of this family, in whom sincerity in word and deed, with faithfulness in conflict, and stedfast maintenance of peace, have been remarkable characteristics. Many traits to this effect are recorded concerning the venerable Bernard Gilpin, and the same features characterized the words and actions of his namesake.

† A work by Dr. Gilpin, entitled Dæmonologia Sacra, or a Treatise of Satan's Temptations, has been lately republished with a memoir of his life, edited by Rev. Alexander Balloch Grosart. Nisbet and Co., London.

grandfather above mentioned, William Gilpin, (later in life so well known as the Vicar of Boldre, and Prebendary of Salisbury, whose 'Forest Scenery' and other works of taste have acquired for him considerable celebrity in the literary and artistic world,) had founded a school, which under his able direction attained a high standing. There also his father had received his education; and, upon the retirement of its founder, was himself Principal during many years, until, in the infant days of his son Bernard, he relinquished his arduous duties, retiring to the Rectory of Norton-sub-Hamdon, Somerset; from whence again he removed, in the year 1807, to Pulverbach, to which living he had been presented by one of his former pupils, the late Lord Kenyon. In this place it was Bernard Gilpin grew up, and amidst its beautiful scenery formed those associations which ever endeared it to him as the home of his childhood.

Early in life he had an impression that he was intended for the ministry, which in after years he regarded as a link in the chain of providences that guided him at length into the sphere God had designed for him. When a young man an appointment in the Bank of England was offered to him, through the interest of a friend of the family, the late Lord Bexley, which the impression above-mentioned induced him to decline. Having completed his academic studies at Cambridge, he took Orders in the Established Church, and, in the year 1829, was presented by the same friend with the living of St. Andrew, in Hertford.

Mr. Gilpin's natural disposition was benevolent, and he was remarkably considerate for the feelings of others. These qualities combined with his general knowledge, and more than common taste for the natural sciences, together with his conversational powers, made him always an interesting companion and greatly endeared him to many. But concerning his early life, and indeed the first few years of his ministry in the church, his own testimony is that he was ignorant of the experimental power of religion. In his own narrative he gives a full account of the great, but, in his case, gentle and gradual change, whereby from being an easy professor of evangelical truth he became a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, and his witness of those things which he had seen and heard, and which his hands had handled of the Word of life (2 Tim. i. 8, Acts xxii. 15, 1 John i. 1).

After this change (so fully described by himself), he passed through much inward and outward trial, while those circumstances transpired which, in the year 1835, terminated his connection with the Establishment, in consequence of his not finding it possible to continue the use of some of the occasional services without wounding his conscience. The effect of this trial upon his spirit was deeply chastening; and perhaps the most marked feature in his case was the meekness of wisdom which was given to him, in consequence of which not only did he and his hearers find much profit, so that he has termed this period 'the golden days' of his ministry in the

Church of England, but in a short time all the opposition, which had been very stormy, was hushed, and for many years before his death he was regarded in the neighbourhood in which he resided with unqualified esteem. No interruption occurred in his ministry in consequence of his leaving the church. Those who had felt the power of the word still continued to hear him, at first in a room, and afterwards in a chapel that was built for him in Port Vale, where he ministered for the space of thirty-three years.

From the time that Mr. Gilpin was himself first awakened, his ministry also was attended with an awakening power; but it was not until August, 1835, that he experienced what he has called his spiritual ordination. Then it was, with a divine light and authority which he knew to be from heaven, he received his commission to scatter abroad the precious seed, the bread of eternal life. The passage applied to him was the whole of Eccles. xi. 1–6, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters,' &c. Thus empowered, and with heaven's seal in his heart, he went forth to sow beside all waters, and to send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass (Isa. xxxii. 20): a labour which was to be attended with an abundant return of harvest. From this time to the end of his life, the Lord caused the clear and sure, yet secret and oft-tried light of truth to shine in the heart of his servant, granting him to experience its sweet renewals from time to time, and enabling him through that charity that 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Cor. xiii. 7), to continue in the word and in prayer, while he hoped to the end for the grace that was to be brought unto him at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter i. 13).

It is hoped that the repetition of those trials which are constantly attendant upon the divine operation within the soul, whereby it is made in God's good time to come forth a vessel for the finer, will be for the edifying in faith, and comfort too, of the tried believer and minister who shall read and re-read in these pages his own exercises of soul, in which he is often well-nigh beaten, but yet stands; and stand he will, who has the God of Jacob for his help. Through these trials was Mr. Gilpin brought again and again, and by them was life maintained in his soul, and his ministry made profitable. They united him closely with the people, while he was made as a true shepherd to go before them in following after the Lord. Amongst these trials was a deep feeling of his own weakness and ignorance. But who that is sent of God would not feel the same, even were he to attain a standard of experience equal to that of the apostle Paul himself? But such a one has learnt to glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. If at any time he feared that was lacking in him which was needful for the stablishing of his flock according to the gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ, he felt as often that he was Christ's minister, and that his strength was made perfect in weakness. Again and again his fear arose, and his right to stand as a watchman was

thereby called into question, and again and again by faith confirmed, until, while surrounded by those who were evidently seals to his ministry, he was called aside, during the months of his last illness, and brought through those deep exercises of soul that issued in the full clearing away of his fear, and the final establishing of his hope.

The Lord has his times of special dealing with the souls of his people; and they are often with them seasons of affliction, or when, by some providence answerable to his own great ends, they are abstracted from the interruption into which their calling in this life exposes them, or withdrawn into some more retired path than that even which his own sent ministers often find in the discharge of their office; wherein they may be said to live more for and in the spiritual welfare of their flocks than for themselves. 'We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord,' said the apostle. If it please the Lord, in some instances, to lead his chosen people, at or near the beginning of his gracious dealings with them, into depths of soul trouble issuing in their clear and powerful deliverance, and giving to their experience it may be, thereby, a certain stamp which they never lose; shall he not, according to his infinite mind, if it please him, in other instances, reserve to the end the fuller experience of those spiritual depths and heights begun in his Spirit's convictions, and maintained through trial and temptation, sanctifying the whole path of his people unto his own glory? Truly he does so work, and in such variety that, as one has well said, 'there is no chalking out the paths of one child of God by those of another; no laying down regular plans of Christian conversion, Christian experience, Christian usefulness, or Christian conversation.'

In the month of October, 1869, the disease which had been gradually undermining his health, advanced and rapidly prostrated his strength. In addition to this, it pleased God to give his servant in one night such a view of his infinite righteousness as discovered to him, in a degree 'too dreadful to speak of,' what sin is, filling his soul with the deepest trembling, and holy awe of God, and at the same time establishing his hope in him. Trembling and gratitude characterized all he said, and the savour of this visitation continued to the end of his life to give weight and unction to the burning words which fell from his lips. It was evident he had been in the presence of God, who is 'glorious in holiness.'

From this time nothing was more remarkable to witness than the bringing forth before his own eyes of that ministry which by the grace of God he had been enabled to fulfil, as if, with eyes fresh anointed to behold it, and as in the presence of his Judge, yea, while he exceedingly trembled before him, it was given to him again by the same Hand as at the first, not now to go forth by faith to sow beside all waters, but in the light of the Lord to behold that he accepted his labour done, and would give him his reward. Again and again, amidst the various exercises of his soul, he was enabled

boldly to set his seal to that gift of God, exclaiming, 'O give thanks to God for that ministry which he gave me, and which he maintained.' Then (referring to Eccles. xi) he added, 'He told me it was MY bread; he bid me cast it upon the waters, and it has been my pleasure to do so whenever and wherever I had opportunity, and he promised I should find it after many days; and NOW the many days are come.' Thus it was with him as with Joseph, 'Until the time that HIS word came: the word of the Lord tried him.'

Hearing of the trials in his church consequent upon his illness, he expressed his wish that though his life were prolonged, its being so should not interfere with any step his congregation might feel directed to take, in the fear of God, towards a settled ministry; but that he did not feel at liberty to name or recommend any one to succeed him. Immediately after this he cried out in the words of the Psalmist, 'Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the Cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.' This prayer he uttered with deep emotion, evidently committing his charge into the hands of the Lord.

It was very generally known that Mr. Gilpin was greatly attached to the practice of infant baptism. For several years after his secession from the Establishment, his mind was much exercised upon the whole subject of baptism. During this period he continued to administer that rite to infants, fearing to alter his course without light and direction upon his path. For this he earnestly sought, through much trial, until unbelief well-nigh prevailed, and he was beginning to think he should never find it; when, one day, as he was lifting up his heart in prayer, he was surprised by a sensible light from the Lord, with an impression stamped upon his heart to the effect that he should abide still in the same path, and that the blessing of God would certainly attend him in it. This was followed by the application of Gen. ix. 14–16, and other passages of scripture; and from this time, to the end of his life, he became more and more confirmed in very tenderly and faithfully following the guidance he had found, by the sweetness and power of the Lord's presence, of which he was often conscious while administering the rite of baptism to infants. He was made to behold the sign when so administered (to use his own words) in a very lovely light, as being a perpetual seal of the faithfulness of God to his covenant. Also as being a sign of grace between the Lord and his church, as the rainbow was made a sign of his covenant with the earth. 'It shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud . . . . and the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant.' 'The graciousness of these words' (he further proceeds) 'impressed me greatly; but especially these, "I will look upon it;" for they seemed to set forth the same consolation with these, "Where

two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." I also observed that the rainbow in the cloud, though a sign that the flood shall never return, had no strength to restrain it; so water baptism, though a sign of grace, has no power to regenerate the soul.' In simply following the direction thus given him, he found the blessing promised; and as in the use of the sign of infant baptism he was enabled to keep his eye fixed by faith upon it as a token of the sovereign power of God to regenerate the souls of men; the Lord also shone upon the same, and confirmed by it both his own faith and that of his hearers. He frequently, during the course of his last illness, spoke of the sweetness and power of the Lord's presence with which he had been visited at these seasons, exclaiming, 'Lord, I thank thee for enabling me wholly to follow thy word to me.' Indeed, the blessing he had so found seemed brought forth before his eyes in the same sacred manner in which his ministry was.

It will be readily believed that, with a mind constituted as his was, Mr. Gilpin painfully felt losing the society of many intellectual and esteemed friends with whom he had been connected in the Church of England. This trial he was in some degree sensible of to the end of his life. But he was, nevertheless, kept stedfast; being made sensible of the infinite mercy that God had displayed towards him in opening his ear to hear the words of the apostle James, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' and in granting unto him that poverty in spirit, meekness, and grace, which Christ has blessed.

The good hand of God was displayed on his behalf in guiding him, in the year 1829, to one who was to be during the period of his earlier trials, not only the loved and loving sharer of his joys and sorrows, but the means of much blessing to him spiritually. For the further illustration of this, the reader is referred to Mr. Gilpin's own narrative, as also to the account of this his first wife, Henrietta, the ninth daughter of the late Rev. R. Jeffreys, for many years Chaplain to the Hon. East India Company, and afterwards Rector of Buntingford, Herts. She died in the year 1841; and ten and a half years afterwards he married Jane Charlotte, third daughter of the late Rev. P. C. Guise, Rector of Craike, in Yorkshire, under circumstances in which the guiding and overruling hand of God was still very manifest, and they mutually felt that a blessing followed their union to the end of his life.

Many points in Mr. Gilpin's writings are worthy of particular notice, perhaps none more so than the extremely tender and faithful manner in which he has been led to trace out in his own history the dawning of that secret light that guided him into the understanding of the truth; that, if possible, it might reach the hearts of some of his fellow sinners: while in the narratives that he has drawn up of the cases of others, those who knew him in his life-time will

recognise one of the most remarkable features of his ministry, viz. the power that was granted him of discerning spiritual life from its earliest manifestations in the soul, drawing out the expression of that life with tenderness and discretion, and nourishing it by the word of God and prayer. In this way he became a true shepherd to watch over and feed Christ's lambs and sheep in his private as well as his public ministrations.

In conclusion, do not the following pages witness that they contain the history and writings of one to whom, by the grace of God, Isaiah xxxiii. 15, 16, is truly applicable, 'He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil; he shall dwell on high?' And again, Dan. xii. 3, 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever?'

CHAPTER II.

His own narrative.

I HAD been for several years Rector of the parish of St. Andrew, in Hertford, when it pleased God to enlighten me to some comprehension of the difference between the form of godliness and its power. Had any one, before this, told me that I had nothing more than the form, I should have felt hurt, and denied the charge: for I was neither destitute of scriptural knowledge, zeal for the promotion of gospel doctrines, nor of very devout feelings. Had any said (which still was most true), 'You are resting in carnal security, upon a sandy foundation;' I should have replied, 'Oh no, far from it! I am deeply sensible of my shortcomings; I know that my only hope is in Christ alone; and trust he will enlighten and teach me more and more to the end.' But the heart which is within us is the greatest of all impostors: this I found. For I had at this time no discovery made to me of the grace and favour of God, but I received the gospel only as I may say by report, and without knowing that wherever the spiritual work of God is being accomplished in any man, he is made to prove the gospel and the law too; even the whole word of God. Therefore my repose, as far as it existed at all, (for I was careful to insist upon it that I was not presumptuously confident,) was partly in the bare hearing of Christ, and principally in my religious feelings, affections, and works, my devotion, zeal, and humility; which I supposed to be all genuine of course; and as there seemed to be the fruits of faith, the conclusion appeared certain, that having faith and works both, I was right on scripture grounds.

Yet I am sensible that I had sometimes a real conviction that my faith, such as it was, had no strong influence on my heart. And how could it? For it was really only a shadow, not 'the substance of things hoped for;' it had no power of God in it; it was in fact only opinion, operating to a certain extent on my natural affections.

That I was preserved in consequence of this true though at that time weak conviction from hardening my heart and stopping my ears, against the entrance of saving religion, I can now only ascribe to the merciful hand of God; for at that time I laboured to overpower this conviction, as being only unsettling, and even unfounded in scripture, which, awarding salvation (though by grace as I even then owned) to a faith which is accompanied with good works, seemed to my then blind understanding as really witnessing to my safety. This conviction, however, would at times have proved distressing had it met with any encouragement from my religious

friends and acquaintances; but they never even examined into the grounds of its rise. Their principal endeavour (and mine with them) seemed to be to account and treat one another as truly converted, as far as they could, which is called 'walking in love:' and should any seriously-disposed person express the conviction which I felt, they seek to overbear it without serious investigation, by truth misapplied; 'You must not give way to doubts and fears, they are sinful; you must honour God by trusting in his mercy.' I call this truth misapplied, because I know well that there are states of mind and persons to whom this might well be spoken; but then they must be such as have proved, and are in earnest to prove afresh the power of the Spirit of life, and witness of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, though entangled by legal workings. To persons of this description the most eminent and spiritual divines often speak in that language, as, for example, Luther and the reformer Bradford; and sometimes unguardedly. But to speak thus to persons, who, like myself at that period, know nothing at all of the spiritual application of God's mercy in Christ to their souls, is most dangerous, and, except sovereign grace prevent, most fatal. So it had like to have proved with me; for I received the poison, and was lulled to rest by it; and I think, since the time that I had become a zealous teacher, I was in a much worse state than before: being almost, if not altogether, one of those to whom Christ says, 'The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you!'

I believe the first circumstance which gave at times a greater weight to the above-mentioned conviction in my mind, that I was not in the right way, was my intercourse with my brother-in-law, the Rev. Charles Jeffreys, to whom I was greatly attached, and whose convictions had been much deeper than mine. He was reserved, quiet, and gentle; but the little he said carried an unusual weight with it, and the feelings which oppressed and at other times relieved him were so naturally expressed in the language of the Psalms, that that portion of God's word began to appear to me in a special manner full of life and application. As he spoke of having found much profit from Luther's works, and I was always fond of the study of theology, I gladly undertook to read, more attentively than I had done before, his celebrated Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. I had often admired the work in past years, though even yet I did not rightly understand it, but I neither felt nor acknowledged my own ignorance except I think thus far: that being very fond of enforcing justification by faith (which I only held in a speculative manner), I had intended to preach a series of sermons on that epistle, and to make Luther's work a kind of directory: but this I now found I could not do; for I perceived I could not frame myself to speak as Luther does, without hypocrisy: so I laid down the book rather confounded, but not seriously alarmed, and found, as in former times, that eager zeal and the conversations of other friends cleared my mind of misgivings.

I went on for a time getting blinder and harder; for I am sensible that in a measure I strove to quench the light of conviction. My brother-in-law rather withdrew from me; uniting himself to a small congregation in London*, neither belonging to the Establishment nor to any of the principal non-conforming denominations. Here I perceived he felt himself settled, and closed against himself an opening of most flattering promise in the University of Cambridge; and his doing so greatly grieved me. I knew nothing to speak of either of the principles or practice of his new friends, but shunning the appearance of bigotry, thought I might safely condemn them, as verging to some dangerous extremes at all events. (For I knew not at that time that the right way will often appear extreme, to such as I then was; and that all will err in it, except kept watchful to prove the continual power of God in their behalf.) They were little known and very reserved; I heard of some amongst them highly esteemed in their own connection, who were persons destitute of refinement and learning; and any logical blunder or vulgar prejudice which I could detect amongst them, I made the most of in my own mind to their discredit, being secretly indisposed to demean myself by associating with them. It so happened, however, by the kind providence of God, that my wife being exercised in mind with a conviction deeper than I had yet felt of the greatness and difficulty of vital religion, was led freely to converse with some of these persons, and to hear their counsel. They manifested so deep an acquaintance and solid understanding in every part of personal religion, such humility, tenderness of spirit, and deep reverence for God and his holy word, that when the result of this interview was communicated to me, I was afraid of daring any longer to fortify my heart against them. Not that I was brought to understand how far they were right and others wrong; but the fear of God so fell upon me that I began to feel, with dismay, that I was wrong myself. Who am I (I began to think) that I should rest in my natural faith and intellectual religion, which enable me to split hairs in doctrine, but leave me always equally in the dark as to my actual state in the sight of God!

Very soon after this, about Christmas in the year 1832, I recollect receiving a particular help, as I was walking up and down in my study, meditating thus: 'I have always imagined I believed that real conversion is God's gift; it comes to that with me now: I must ask if it will please him to grant me this mercy for Jesus Christ's sake.' The help I speak of was not any bright hope that this would be granted, nor any beam of light to show me what the blessing was; but my mind sensibly received a new direction, and with it a spirit of anxious prayer, which, though often damped for a time, has never left me since. I saw that I understood but little, had no real contrition, no solid hope, no appropriating faith; but, instead of

* The late Mr. Burrell's. See the end of Chapter XXII.

going on labouring to frame these things, I saw that God's way set before me was to ASK for them; and that my sensible destitution of them all must be matter for continual confession in prayer.

My friends (for so I began now to find them), when they perceived this tender conviction and serious seeking in me, were ready to acknowledge it at once, as the hand of God for good. They showed an anxious caution themselves lest they should darken counsel by words without knowledge; but their fixed principle always was, that what I had begun to feel, namely, real tenderness of heart, the fear of God, and an anxious spirit of prayer, accompanied by self-mistrust and humiliation, were the seed of all vital religion; that through the maintenance of the very same things they had been brought to all they ever enjoyed; and that whenever any are preserved in this spirit it is manifest that God is leading them, though in a 'way that they knew not' (Isaiah xlii. 16).

Some would here say, 'Yes; if you had been wrong, as you say, in your own religion before, it was fit you should feel this abasement yourself; but why judge of our state by your own, and expect that we ought to feel the same?' I answer, All this tenderness and godly fear will grow and increase, with the increase of the spiritual knowledge of God and of Christ; and I am sure I found this true in the oldest and most really established of my friends, who were greatly more subdued in heart and poorer in spirit than others who, like myself, had only begun to enter into the same religion. Wherefore, to suppose that our being right will lead to the decrease and extinction of this anxiety and humiliation, is in itself a proof that we are not right; and much more if, so far from feeling sympathy with this spirit in others, we despise it, blindly confound it with legal bondage, or shrink from it as too painful and humbling for ourselves. I am sure David did not so, when he declares that a broken and contrite heart is the sacrifice God despises not; nor Paul, when he had the sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself. Such as they will come down, and gladly too, even though they have been at times 'caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words,' to commune heart to heart with those who only begin to draw near, as I then did, for the first time, to the thick darkness wherein God dwells. And I am sure I found this with some of my friends, and knew that it was 'the unity of the Spirit,' to be preserved 'in the bond of peace' (Eph. iv. 3); that it was the unity of the brethren, pleasant and good, which David describes in Psalm cxxxiii, comparing it to the inimitable ointment of the sanctuary, and to the dew of Hermon upon Zion: nor can I describe to my reader the amazing difference I found between this kind of communion, which was both heart-searching and encouraging, and my former communion with others, which, as I have said, invariably induced a false confidence, a secret self-pleasing, and so a deadening of spiritual conviction in my heart.

I cannot, however, dismiss this subject without saying, that to

find and to maintain this real communion of saints with saints on earth, is always hard, and requires a most jealous walking in the fear of God, lest the Spirit, being grieved, should depart, and the unity degenerate into dissimulation, or at best into mere worldly friendship; or lest we should be offended, and so affection should give way to prejudice. We ought therefore seriously to lay certain considerations to heart, such as these:—The Lord has told us that wherever there is wheat there will be tares also. The Ethiopian eunuch, or any such humble seeker for truth, might have sought for this true communion, but had he fallen in with none but such persons as Judas and Demas, though apostles and evangelists in office and name, he would never have felt it, even in the primitive church. And I say, that we must ever be on our guard, prepared to expect these tares amongst the wheat; for often it will be found, that where the light of the gospel faithfully preached shines the brightest, tares of the worst description appear. Some, willing for a season to rejoice in another's light, but gradually becoming more and more inflated with the most devilish of all sins, spiritual pride; others, who learn to speak well, in consummate hypocrisy; or who, mistaking light for grace, undertake to be officious teachers of what they have never proved. These may so obtrude themselves as to cause some to stumble at the threshold. But, if we enter in, and find the society of living witnesses of God's power and grace in the gospel, still it is needful to remember that every one of these has in him the flesh lusting against the spirit, the body of sin and death. Nor will it be amongst these, as it is amongst dead professors, where Satan keepeth his palace and his goods are in peace. For here we shall find a society exercised with his fiery darts, so that if the apostle Paul should himself be amongst them, he must be bold in God to speak the gospel of God with much contention (1 Thess. ii. 2). Therefore we must take double heed lest, through the abounding of these evils, our own love should wax cold. Once more, if we would really maintain spiritual unity, we must expect that it will please God to search out and to mortify the secret pride of our hearts. Perhaps our taste is very fastidious, or our attainments in one direction or another considerable; or we may only think them so. Then it will be a hard matter to discern the power of God, manifested in mean earthen vessels, and very hard to overcome our deep prejudices. By such means, especially, God proves us, whether we really esteem his inestimable treasure of spiritual life before our own honour and ease; and I am sure in these matters I have had discoveries of my sin which have made me to tremble lest God should leave me to myself. And when persons turn away from cleaving to the despised cause of God merely on this account, they will not own it to be on this account, and the fearful word is fulfilled, 'The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble' (Prov. iv. 19). Notwithstanding all these hindrances, if we would obey God rather than man, we must by his grace be firm here;

since there is nothing in the whole Bible more insisted on than the finding and maintaining of this spiritual unity. 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren' (1 John iii. 14); and, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me' (Matt. xxv. 40). So I deeply felt; and all this called into deep and incessant exercise that spirit of grace and supplication which God had mercifully granted me; and it was only by continual confession and prayer that I overcame here.

Indeed, I began in many ways to prove that I had entered into a path of very great trial. For example, I found at times severe inward opposition against what I felt to be really humbling, and which extorted from me the unreserved confession that I knew nothing aright in spiritual religion. This inward opposition was of course increased when I witnessed (as I expected) the contempt or pity which this acknowledgment excited in others; to whom I still believed I might have said, what they were very far from believing as applied to themselves, 'Weep not for me, but for yourselves.' Sometimes I thought I should be utterly confounded, since I, a teacher myself, who had been telling people for years how needful it was for them to be religious, must now become only a seeker. Yet in all this, though 'cast down,' I was 'not forsaken.' There began to appear to me more light and instruction in the word of God than I had ever felt before, and that much in it is calculated greatly to encourage any one in my dark condition to press on, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.' Now also the writings of some of those authors which I had read long before began to be of eminent service to me, especially Luther's Commentary on the Galatians, which I now took up for the third time, and (as I may express it) almost devoured it, so weighty and important did the whole appear to me to be. I now saw from it, what I had not in the least discerned before, that the faith which he describes at large is a great work of God, which most surely had not been accomplished in me. I was obliged to make to myself an honest confession that I never felt nor could feel such a realizing power in Christ revealed in my heart, as to swallow up law and condemnation, wrath and sin; nay, that these latter never appeared to me so truly awful as they continually did to him. To use the words of a dear and respected friend, in whose heart, about the same time, I believe God was working by the same means, this book 'brought me to walk up and down, crying, Oh, this faith, this faith, I have not got it!' I mean to say that the conviction that I had it not was accompanied with quick fear. I saw this was the true faith, the needful faith, found in the regenerate heart, and nowhere else. I had indeed heard and read in many books of a similar confidence expressed; but I now perceived that what gives power to the faith which Luther describes, is its continual victory in a concurrent and most deep conflict; this showed me that the difference between my

former faith and this faith was not only in degree but in kind; so that the longer I should go on and the greater advancement I should make on that false foundation, the worse I should be, not the better; the further from salvation, not the nearer to it. About this time the providence of God threw in my way Dr. Owen's Commentary on Psalm cxxx; and I cannot forget the light which shone into my heart, from some sentences in that searching work, especially in those parts wherein he discriminates between false faith and true. 'Some (he says) might possibly have had trouble in their consciences about sin, had it not been for their *opinion of forgiveness*. This hath prevented or stifled their convictions;—not healed their wounds, which is the work of the gospel; but kept them from being wounded, which is the work of security. Yea, here lies the ruin of the most of them who perish under the preaching of the gospel. They have received *the general notion of pardon;* it floats in their minds, and presently presents itself to their relief on all occasions. Doth God at any time ... begin to deal with their consciences?—before their conviction can ripen or come to any perfection, before it draw nigh to its perfect work, they choke it, and heal their consciences with the notion of pardon.'

At this time, as will be readily supposed, I was greatly discouraged respecting my ministry; for the fear of God so entered my heart, that I trembled to think of being a blind guide to the blind; seeing both of these are to fall into the ditch: and I think for several months I dared not even to read some of those chapters in the prophets which testify against false prophets and teachers not sent from God. I began to perceive that if I possessed that true and enlightened faith which I longed for, I should be enabled to prove what the will and direction of God respecting me were, but that at present I could do nothing of the kind. In reference to this, however, and to every other point connected with my outward as well as inward walk, I was mercifully kept in a very cautious and tender frame. I perceived that for me to throw up my situation because of this discouragement, would be a very intemperate step indeed; and much more presumptuous than to continue committing my whole way to the Lord, and entreating him for Christ's sake to clear the right path before me.

On the 6th of January, 1833 (soon after my mind sensibly received the new direction I have before described), I was preaching in the evening from these words, 'Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' My discourse was, in the letter of it, very evangelical; but I felt deep misgivings of heart, from the conviction that I lacked a spiritual understanding in the power of the doctrines I set forth; and my concluding words were to this effect, 'Knowing, my brethren, that neither you nor I can possibly enter into these truths aright, without the special favour and power of God; I charge it both on you and on myself, to be instant in prayer day and night for this divine blessing.' The words were only common, but I per-

ceived a power as I pronounced them, then new to me, which, I believe I may add, has never since quitted me in preaching. It was not elevating, but humbling, as though in my spirit I sunk out of the pulpit amongst my people, and was made in simple earnest to look up, with such among them as feared God, for everything from him. I must say I was encouraged, more than four years after this, to find something of the same nature greatly insisted upon and ably enforced by the eminent reformer Calvin, in one of his sermons on Job (xxxiii. 6, 7), 'I also am formed out of the clay: behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.' As this influence really convinced me of ignorance and weakness, some who know not the spiritual life of God, might be disposed to imagine it might have a tendency to stop my mouth: instead of which I can truly say it was perhaps the first thing that sensibly established my ministry. I began in the real weakness which I felt, and while earnestly seeking for the grace of Jesus Christ, to perceive at times, though but dimly, the hold of God's powerful hand upon me, and even then hoped this discernment was made in consequence of a very small measure of that very faith which I continually cried for. Also, though I knew not fully what the spiritual application of the scriptures to the heart might be, and was greatly afraid of feigning what I really had not, yet the effect of God's word was very powerful in my heart. The majesty and life which I sometimes perceived in it both abased and encouraged me; and in reference to my ministry, I was frequently, more or less for about two years, conscious of a power which gently kept reproving and so alarming me, yet always caused a spring of hope in God's mercy, from these words, 'Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.' And though I can truly say I was greatly confounded before God, I was never confounded before the people; nor, through his singular mercy, moved out of the way. Now, though I preached with much more tenderness and deep self-application than before, I began to perceive I was greatly disliked by many, and many charges were advanced against me: but being made very cautious in my walk, these greatly resolved themselves into one, perhaps the hardest of any to bear with patience,—that however well I meant, I was greatly clouded in my understanding, if indeed I had any; perhaps partly deranged.

I found no relief in endeavouring to counteract these aspersions, still less in cherishing animosity against those who made them; but I found at times, though not easily, both relief and benefit, in seeking through prayer to attain by all this reproach to a deeper feeling of my own sin, especially pride, that I might be delivered from it through Christ. And I would here seriously charge any who may happen to read these lines, and may either expect or be enduring the reproach I then laboured under, to be very watchful of their own spirit. Probably it may not have occurred to them that all this reproach may be only, in their own case, the fulfilment of a

great promise of God, for good and not for evil: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent' (1 Cor. i. 19). For the fulfilment of his promises may often prove exceedingly unwelcome to the pride of our natural hearts; yet in nothing is our want of sympathy with Christ more forcibly shown, than by refusing to submit with patience to the smallest part of his sufferings: 'He is despised and rejected of men.' I was both directed and encouraged to seek to improve the reproach I suffered in the way I here state, by the timely correspondence of one of my above-mentioned friends; so that I felt both in this and the other varied trials which soon involved me, that the advantage of real Christian friendship and sympathy is invaluable.

In the following autumn I was greatly encouraged by the blessing which I assuredly believe attended my conversations with a young man then ill in my parish. I have preserved elsewhere a particular account of his case, so will only add here that it appeared to me plain that the felt darkness and anxiety which were in him as well as in myself, were caused by the same hand of power; that I was made an instrument in directing him in that way of confession and prayer which I was following myself, not without sensible benefit; and though his end was rather sudden, he testified with his dying breath, what he had never been able to say before, that he had found the mercy he had earnestly sought. The particular effect of this circumstance was that it made me feel a ground for hope that it pleased God to bless, and therefore certainly to allow my ministry; a hope which not long afterwards was further strengthened by another circumstance which appeared at first only to damp it.

I received one Saturday, when about to make a special preparation for the next day's duty, a very serious and searching letter from one who deeply felt all he wrote. He particularly animadverted upon the easy manner in which many assume the ministerial office, without knowing, or deeming it needful to learn, whether they have a commission from God or not. In my then state of mind I keenly felt and deeply fell under this charge; and my fears of presumption so prevailed, that I only found strength to confess and pray: none to prepare for the following day's duty. But towards the evening I was sensible of a revival and spring of hope that enabled me to arise from my heaviness; and I think I never found my mind more clear, and my heart more deeply and tenderly engaged in my work, than the next day, when I took for my text these words, 'And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man;' and my self-application (though not apparently so to others) was so peculiar throughout the discourse, that I may compare it in its measure to the self-devotedness of Samson, when he took hold of the pillars and said, 'Let me die with the Philistines,' and bowed himself with all his might till the house fell. And I do seriously and deeply feel that whenever—the conscience being really made tender—the conviction of sin terrifies us, there is no way of deliverance so effectual

as this:—Receive the charge home, fall under it, and confess it, with supplication for mercy, and watch whether in thus persevering to act, we do not begin to find the strength which is only made perfect in weakness. This is through the tender mercy of God, who says to his backsliding Israel, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquity' (Jer. iii. 13). The next day a poor woman, whose simplicity and earnestness I had long noticed, sent word to me, that having been much tried in mind, she had come the day before to church in great darkness; but had never felt such a heart-searching power as under that sermon, and was persuaded the Lord spoke to her in it.

But my mind, very shortly after this, began to be more deeply troubled than ever. The great opposition, through reproach, which I endured from without, joined with my weak apprehension of the Lord's arm revealed in my favour, and the fear lest I should in consequence shrink from the light, rather than come to it, caused this trouble to abound. To which some other, though private trials, were added. In this state it pleased God to help me a little by a very singular dream: a mode of instruction which his word certainly authorizes us to believe he sometimes employs, and therefore we shall do well to receive it in simplicity; though I know a very sound discretion is here needful.

I thought in my dream that I was in a somewhat mean Greek building, with many serious persons in the eastern dress. At the upper end of the room was a teacher, seated, and earnestly engaged in conversation with the most unaffected simplicity. His countenance was too remarkable ever to be forgotten by me; but it did not occur to me at the time, though strongly afterwards, that he could represent no other than the apostle Paul. Small, if not rather deformed in his person, strongly Jewish in features and complexion. There was a mixture of mildness and severity, dignity and meanness, in his appearance, which excited a singular combination of feelings in myself. The meanness I despised; but immediately the dignity and severity awed me into reverence, and the mildness excited affection. Unable to bear the power of his eye, which seemed to read my thoughts, I shrunk back behind the pillars; upon which he sent two young men for me, and when I reached him, he smiled affably, and conversed with great tenderness. When I considered this afterwards, though afraid of presuming, I was not able to refuse encouragement from it. If, thought I, God really designed to show me, though in a glass darkly, that there is a unity of heart between me and such as Paul was, why should I be so utterly cast down? for he is able to appear for me, and to make me also a minister and a witness of his truth. Yet still, because the merciful but heavy hand of God was upon me according to his covenant promise, 'I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,' none of these things made me light-minded; nor could I speak of them without trembling, nor in general speak of them at all. Nevertheless they sensibly stayed me, and I rather think this especial

circumstance helped me through a trial, which I will not describe, a few weeks afterwards, which, in the dark and fearful state I was in, was almost overwhelming. And I remember further, that after this trial had taken place, while I was praying in consequence of it, with much fear and sorrow, these words were suitably brought to my mind—and I may add that I have never since lost some practical impression of their power—'By strength shall no man prevail' (1 Sam. ii. 9).

But, if we really walk in the fear of God, especially in any responsible situation, circumstances will occur, both difficult and humbling; and this I began to find. My next peculiar trial in my public ministry, though in the final result establishing, was by no means so gratifying as that of the young man who had lately died in my parish. I was requested to administer the sacrament to an invalid lady, whom I had reason to fear had neither found nor was rightly seeking that spiritual faith without which our devotion is but refined self-righteousness. Under these circumstances I was persuaded that, had she been in a lower rank of life, I should rather have gone to warn and caution, and endeavour to direct her into that way wherein I had found a measure of solid peace. I was therefore further persuaded, and deeply so, that the real fear of God directed me in the same way, notwithstanding the difficulty I might find in walking accordingly. I found here, as in other instances, that by proceeding with earnest prayer, a way was opened for me. Being asked to attend on a certain day, I wrote beforehand and in great kindness, all I felt, to the family; and concluded my letter with saying that, if on deliberation they felt dissatisfied with me, of course they were at liberty to send for another minister; but that if they wished for my advice, I must give it according to my conscience. They acted kindly, but were much hurt; nor was I ever sent for to the lady herself: and the effect so far made me feel sorry; but I can never forget the inward help I received from thus acting. I believe my being made faithful in this one step secured me from many painful trials of a similar kind; and I perceived from that day forward that it pleased the Lord to perfect his strength in my weakness. Then, to show how one thing is set against another for our profit, if we are simply led to walk in the fear of God, I must mention that about the same time he made me an instrument of good to another lady of the same advanced age, who as long as her health had permitted had been also a hearer of mine. She had been for years in earnest, but had never found the full consolation and liberty of the gospel. Sincerely religious, as I believe, and as she had been accounted, she was rather induced from long habit to conceal her secret depths of fear and conviction, because she found scarcely any, in this light-minded and confident generation, who could in the least profitably sympathize with her, and direct her how to overcome them in the right way. As soon after my own awakening as I began to realize a hope in the mercy

and guidance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I had gone to see her, and found to my great encouragement (both on my own account and hers) that we could now freely sympathize, and enter into each other's feelings; indeed, my words entered into her heart, and hers into mine, from that day forward. So that she gradually emerged out of all her clouds and darkness, into a state of great spiritual clearness, and often of the most divine consolation, wherein she was borne aloft on eagle's wings, and in Jordan her feet stood firm. Our friendship increased to our mutual edification, from the autumn of 1833 till December 1835, when, at the advanced age of ninety-two years, she was called hence by a most triumphant death*.

My reader will not be surprised to learn that being made exceedingly cautious by the discovery of my own past self-deception, I laboured most of all, in preaching and conversation, to prevent my hearers from resting at ease on an uncertain foundation. One thing which greatly distressed me was to notice the blind devotion evinced by some in their attendance upon the Lord's table. I bent my whole strength, as God enabled me, against this subtle self-righteousness; but one great hindrance I began now to feel in a more special and pointed manner than ever before:—this was the commencement of a new series of trials to me. It was the fact that the occasional services of the Established Church do most of them involve a principle which increasingly appeared to me unsound, namely, that they refer to all persons alike addressed in them as being in the way to heaven.

When I first began to feel myself seriously embarrassed by this, about the commencement of the year 1834, I was severely tried indeed. I had no wish to be a Dissenter, nor to plunge myself, as it appeared, into great trouble by abandoning almost the whole of my income, and with it what prospect I had of any increase to it. I was afraid of encouraging the factious spirit of the age, which I fear has in no small degree preyed upon the very vitals of spiritual religion among the principal non-conforming denominations. Besides this, I was still more afraid of tempting God, by a presumptuous faith in his providence, should I dare to walk in a way in which he did not really direct me. For if, in a secret spirit of pride, we begin to think ourselves strong enough to despise trials, as being too spiritual to feel their weight, I believe the Lord, if he deal in mercy, will generally convince us of our mistake, by suffering us to rue the consequences. Besides, I perceived I had been first awakened in the Establishment, and my ministry there had for a time been attended with some evident marks of the blessing of God; and arguing on human grounds, it seemed very expedient on many accounts that I should continue in it. I considered also the example of some very good men, not only amongst the early reformers and

* See Memoir of her daughter, Mrs. Mary Tims, by Mr. Gilpin.

martyrs who in part moulded our ecclesiastical polity, but in modern times also; such, for example, as the late W. Romaine, who was firm in his church principles, while his works, especially his letters, show his deep acquaintance with spiritual religion, clear discernment of the Spirit's work on the heart, and happy communion with God.

Here, however, as in former instances, I found no relief from reasoning; and deeply felt it to be a case in which I could neither trust my own judgment, nor the advice of friends, nor indeed take counsel of any man. All I could do was to 'withdraw into the wilderness and pray.' The crisis was exceedingly important; I thought that a wrong step might be almost irretrievable, and that to harden my heart against any conviction of the Spirit would be still worse; so that I only besought the mercy and condescension of God to guide me through this perilous place.

Now also I began to be beset in all directions by the kind solicitations of many of my former friends and my relations, who did not in the least enter into my feelings, but were strongly persuaded that I was wrong. Just about this time, however, a clergyman whom I had previously only slightly known, having heard a confused report of my difficulties, came over to see me. He did not enter much into any outward question; but when I told him how I had been tried in spiritual points, he gave me a simple account of trials of a similar kind he was under himself, and how at times he had found the entrance of a lively hope in God's mercy. I cannot describe how relieving I found this to be; how my heart united with his, and how encouraging his visit proved. I can never think of it without being put in mind of what is said, that Jonathan 'arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God' (1 Sam. xxiii. 16).

It was not till the 26th of July, 1834, that I found any light in my dark way. I was greatly agitated in mind on that day, fearing lest I should too lightly handle those points which gave me so much concern relative to the abuse of the Lord's supper; and while I continued walking and crying in my heart to God, I thought my whole way seemed to get darker and darker, and my fears rose higher and higher. At last the impression deepening and clearing in my mind of the danger, especially in this self-confident age, of mingling the precious with the vile, and making no difference between the holy and the profane, I sat down and relieved my feelings by writing a letter to my Diocesan, Dr. Kaye. While thus engaged, many objections started up in my mind. However, all these were overruled by an authoritative intimation that the time was now come for me to act, and that longer delay would be sinful. I will not endeavour to explain these things, because I am certain that those who really know what communion with God is, will understand them; and others, I fear, will lightly disbelieve them, however well confirmed, or cautiously explained.

I found upon examination that in those places wherein the principle I objected to was involved, in the sacramental, baptismal, and burial Services of the Church, a few verbal alterations might be made by which the objection I felt might be obviated. From this day I found strength to resolve always on every subsequent occasion to make these alterations, fully acquainting the Bishop with my intention and the reasons of it, and then leaving the whole affair, under Providence, in his hands; only I perceived I must be cautious to yield to no persuasions, from any quarter made me, to leave my public charge voluntarily, even for a while; for indeed it would only have been dishonest to profess to be thus requiring time for reflection or taking advice, when in fact my mind was fully made up, and that by the mercy and guidance of God himself.

The serenity and tranquillity which I enjoyed for a day or two after this was very refreshing; the agitation in my mind was hushed, and a measure of quiet penetrating power granted me in my ministry the following day. In the course of the ensuing week, I was again at times tried with perplexing doubts; but all was again cleared up about the end of the week, with a confirmed persuasion that I was walking in a very safe, though perhaps in a very troublous path.

The Bishop, after some time, answered me with great moderation; and after I had rejoined, he chose to remain perfectly silent, till official complaints made to him of my non-conformity obliged him to interfere. As I was convinced I should do wrong by showing reluctance in tendering my resignation of the Rectory after this, I supposed the crisis would have proved immediate. But it pleased God to cause further delay, by the very kind interference both of some of my parishioners and of others more remote. I still found my only support in withdrawing from all interference even with friends, as a party in my own favour; only I continued incessantly praying for further mercy and direction, and quietly exercising my ministry. Till at length the matter was finally decided in the beginning of June, 1835; and I have not yet found that this termination came at all either too soon or too late; for all which I have more reason to thank God than I can express here.

[The following is a part of Mr. Gilpin's rejoinder to the Bishop, whose letter was explanatory of that construction of the sentences objected to, which appeared to him satisfactory.]

. . . I HAVE no hesitation in saying that your Lordship's observation, 'The formality is not in you, but in the parties themselves,' is satisfactory wherever my office obliges me to pronounce scriptural words, even as the mouth of many who feel them not. But to be called upon to express in prayer what at the very time I do not and cannot believe, seems to oblige me so far to be a formalist myself. And this I believe to be more or less the case in reference to each of those passages to which I have called your attention. I say

more or less, i. e. as far as the implication they contain is more or less explicit, that we address individuals possessed at the time of saving religion; or (as in the burial Service) speak of them as being already saved. . . .

Many would excuse these sentences on this ground, 'Let us not judge others.' I fully concur in their words, and would myself add, Let us not judge indeed. But if we use words which imply the real safety or salvation of others, we do judge to acquit, though not to condemn. The last is justly abhorrent to our feelings; the first may in one respect be considered more dangerous, because being more pleasing, it helps to lull the conscience to sleep. . . .

I have acted with no precipitation, but after a most serious and anxious investigation, in the only way in which I could act consistently with my conscience. To feel what I have stated above, and to have disregarded the feeling, or to have acted upon it in an underhand way, which perhaps for a time I might have done, seemed to me contrary to my plain duty and to Christian simplicity. I could therefore only submit my case fully to you as my Diocesan; not indeed wishing to bring serious trouble upon myself, but not endeavouring by any policy to escape from it, if it please God to bring it upon me. . . .

With the most sincere respect,

I am, &c.,

B. G.

[Part of the further correspondence.]

Dec. 4, 1834.

I RETURN your Lordship sincere thanks for the kind feeling expressed towards me in your letter of the 29th ult. At the same time I am aware that its language is so decisive as to leave me no alternative. I cannot draw back. To go forward will apparently entail distressing consequences on myself, and, I fear, in one way or another, upon some others also. But I have not been brought into my present strait by any rashness or desire of singularity. I have proceeded step by step with continual fear; and now the step before me, I fear most of all. Yet God has hitherto (I believe) graciously helped me; and whatever I have feared the most, I have found in the review most encouraging. May he grant the same still. I purpose sending to your Lordship my formal resignation during the next week; and in that prospect shall consider that I address my congregation, as Rector, for the last time on Sunday next. Should there be any delay in the appointment of my successor, I could wish to continue to occupy my pulpit in the interim, except you should forbid it.

I believe I shall ever have reason to feel thankful to God for preserving me during a period of great trial, looking up to him for direction, in a feeling sense of weakness in myself. So that neither

that sense of weakness nor the fear of reproach have induced me, till now obliged to it, to abandon a charge which I have felt that God allowed me to continue: though indeed I undertook it, as I fear many do, at a time when I had no real perception of its most weighty responsibility.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

B. G.

[The Bishop was unwilling hastily to accept the resignation, and wrote in answer to the above concisely, but in his usual strain of temperate kindness, to press upon Mr. Gilpin a voluntary retirement for a time. To which Mr. G. replied as follows:—]

Dec. 31, 1834.

I MUST beg leave to apologise for my delay in answering your Lordship's last letter. The delay has arisen wholly from my sense of the very critical situation in which I am placed, and the difficulty I feel in acting one way or another, either to retard or to hasten a crisis, the prospect of which occasions me very deep anxiety.

My Lord, my principles are already as fully laid before you as I know how in written documents to place them. I believe I have not otherwise offended my people than by the consistency with which I have maintained those principles, and insisted upon the real sanctification of life inseparable from the cordial admission of them. I have not been impelled by any impetuous violence, but have been calm in my own mind, and I believe evidently subdued in manner, feeling, and word, both in my public and private intercourse with them. I am still entirely willing to labour amongst them and for them; nor am I sure that I could ever separate myself from those who will not, in circumstances of outward discredit and difficulty, separate themselves from *me*. I owe them, even those opposed to me, all patience, to spend and be spent for them as their appointed minister: but my duty does not require me to concede my principles to theirs; nor to be diverted from the plain straightforward course in practice, which is the only one God blesses me in. Therefore I cannot consent voluntarily to retire for a time, in the hope (the vain hope) that I may be made to see I have gone too far in my statements from the pulpit, or been too much afraid lest in this very corrupt and self-confident age I should leave them resting on a false foundation. I am persuaded, and I believe your Lordship is also, that the trial would only end in disappointment; added to which, it would embarrass my own mind.

Therefore if I may stay and continue to occupy my pulpit, I shall be thankful; if I must resign my proper charge, I am passive. Your Lordship is, under Providence, the judge, and must be the agent in this matter. To you I have surrendered my cause long ago, as I was in duty bound to do; and by a late act of my own have surrendered it most fully. I assure you it is no small ingredient, in my

present very painful trial, to reflect upon the moral danger to which it exposes me. There is no position more ensnaring than to be regarded, or to regard oneself, as a sufferer for conscience sake. I hope God will keep me from falling; and endue your Lordship continually with spiritual wisdom in the administration of your high and most responsible office.

With the sincerest respect, &c.,

B. G.

CHAPTER III.

His own narrative continued.

The state of my mind during the long and perplexing period which intervened between the commencement and the termination of my correspondence with Dr. Kaye, will in some measure be perceived from what has been said. I was kept, by the mercy of God, more desirous of pondering the path of my feet, than of looking before me to future events, which seemed, indeed, if ever I anticipated them, only portentous and gloomy. I had a deepening impression of the difficulty as well as the importance of the work of personal religion; that the spiritual work of God in the heart, and the clear manifestation of it, and the continual progress of it, in ourselves, and as far as he directs our influence, in others also, are the great objects of the desire, prayer, and spiritual labour of every true believer: really involving the answer to these great petitions, 'Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' Hence I never led my people aside, for an hour, to those superficial questions (though important in their place) which my outward situation seemed rather to invite me to consider. And I know that in this cleaving altogether to that which is spiritual, I enjoyed a sweet testimony at times that God was with me of a truth, and made his own word, delivered by me, not to return void. So that these were the golden hours of my ministry in the Establishment, and I dared as little to shorten them for a day, by any hasty act of my own, as to protract them beyond the time when God, who has all hearts in his hand, should appoint their termination. Twice only, during this period, I thought I discerned what the eventual direction of God would be, after the dissolution of my connection with the Establishment; even the continuance of my ministry in Hertford. On the first occasion I was exceedingly cast down, almost without hope; on the second, I found a measure of strengthening peace, as though it were said of me, Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid? and as if in the strength of that great

comfort I could say to any one who should venture to express a wish for the continuance of my ministry, 'License a room for me, and I will stay amongst you.' I thought also of the door mentioned in Rev. iii. 8, 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.' Yes, I said, if I may but have grace to stoop so low as to enter into that door.

Here I desire to touch more expressly on a very important point in personal religion, which is grievously misunderstood and neglected by many in a high profession: I mean the humbling power which the real entrance of the grace of God to us proud sinners always brings with it. We naturally find this distasteful, and would leave it wholly out of our account, if we could. But I am sure that, except we continue to be self-deceived, we shall be unable to accomplish this evil imagination of our heart. For the evil principle which abides even in those that are regenerated, will always work in them, and, except continually subdued, will reign too. 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other' (Gal. v. 17). Hence it follows that the merciful but heavy chastisements of God, though they make way for life, peace, joy, and love in the spirit, by subduing sin, are grievous and galling to the flesh. Therefore the members of the church militant cannot continue in a thriving spiritual state, without the sore exercise of the cross, which is both outward and inward. And if the power of the Spirit be on us, we shall not be able to make light of this cross, and so to thwart the design of God. Whence it further follows that a disposition to make light of trials, and not to find matter for deep humiliation in them, is most opposite to the disposition wrought by grace. For God speaks unto us 'as unto children,' saying, that we must neither despise his chastening on the one hand, nor faint at his rebukes on the other. Wherever the presence of the Spirit is, there must be the fear and trembling which his divine majesty inspires. 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word' (Isa. lxvi. 2). This poverty, contrition, and trembling do not arise without a keen and cutting conviction of sin, that is, of indwelling sin, as well as former acts of sin,—sin, both in its principle and in its operation. Nor is all this humbling fear felt at first only; but even when through the grace of God we are so urged by it all to Christ, as to be brought to the very fullest experience of his cleansing blood and righteousness, still the humiliation goes on, and is deepened: 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn' (Zech. xii. 10); 'That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee,' &c. (Ezek. xvi. 63). Hence throughout the whole of a man's walk in the power of the gospel, there is the continuance of this broken and contrite heart which God will not despise. The heart, healed indeed, but not hardened, by every renewed application of the power of God's love in Christ.

This is the very thing which makes the true Christian life and Christian conflict seem mean and inglorious in the world. Every other conqueror rejoices in his strength, but he who follows Christ in the regeneration, finds his strength only made perfect in weakness. And it is very generally the case, on certain prominent occasions, that the strength is hidden, while the weakness is made manifest. And the Lord's hand in severe mercy is often heavy upon his faithful servants, to search out the sin, and wound the pride of their heart, that they may be effectually delivered from sin through Christ. 'Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me' (2 Cor. xii. 7). I do wish I could see in many who profess a very spiritual religion, a real penetrating and heart-subduing understanding on this point; and that they might clearly know the infinite difference between this humiliation of heart, and the spirit of legal bondage with which they always confound it. This last is a most deadly and subtle enemy to our peace, and if we are made to know our own hearts, we discern that more or less it continually assaults us; but the first is the most blessed fruit of the Spirit, without which, though we may be at ease in false peace, the true peace of God never rules in our hearts at all. Yet the possession of it makes us ready to fall in the dust, and to tremble before God, whenever a cloud threatens, or a trial is sent.

I am sure I found this to be the case, when at last the trial which had so long threatened me really came. I found (as I hope soon to show) consolation in it afterwards, though not at the time. It yields afterwards the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb. xii. 11). God never proves himself our help without showing us that we have destroyed ourselves (Hos. xiii. 9). He showed me that as far as I had acted in my own spirit, I was more like Johanan the son of Kareah (Jer. xlii, xliii), than like Matthew the publican. Nor can I describe my condition better than in these words—empty, void, and waste. Yet, notwithstanding this, I found something better than any ground for glorying in the flesh. I found that his grace had so prevailed and ruled in my heart, as to have hindered my walking in the imagination of my evil heart; so that I had neither brought darkness upon my way, nor hardened myself against his fear. I found, moreover, that he regards the prayer of the destitute; and doth not despise their prayer (Psa. cii. 17). And I say all this was a rich compensation, and the other did me good and no harm.

I had been sensible for a week or two before the close of my ministry in St. Andrew's Church of a diminution of that light and help from God which had before that been granted me in the administration of public worship; and I began to feel alarm on this account, lest I should prove to be in some way opposing the will of God respecting me. I received the official communication of the

acceptance of my resignation, on the day before Whitsunday, while I was endeavouring to prepare for the pulpit. But my heart was not at all in tune to celebrate joyfully the anniversary of that blessed day of Pentecost; and when the communication arrived, my first impression was that of deliverance; yet, on the whole, fear prevailed above hope, and often unbelief above faith. Who are we, that we should expect another, i. e. a brighter thing, than David and Paul found: of whom one tells us that his heart failed him; and the other cries out, 'O wretched man,' because of this feeling discovery of sin (Psa. xl. 12, Rom. vii. 24)? Still I began to find, which was most encouraging, that I had brought no cloud upon my path: moreover my mouth was rather more freely opened than shut, in speaking from the word of God. It is not in my power to show to any who know not the secret teaching of God, how real an intimation this, as I felt it, becomes of the will of God respecting us. On the very next day the aged lady whom I mentioned before as a witness with me of all I had handled of the Word of life, sent to request me to come to her house and expound. I did so; taking Micah vii, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause,' &c. But when I came to the conclusion, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity,' &c.? I could only discern the glory of it, as a land which was very far off. Yet, though the flint was not turned into a springing well in my heart, it was in hers; which she afterwards told me; which was, I believe, intended by God to encourage me, and it did so: and though all who are proud may disdain such things, sure I am, if they begin to be partakers of the grace of God, they will dwell, as to their souls, in a dry and barren land, till they are subdued to receive them with great thankfulness. My aged friend, though she had been all her lifetime a member of the Established Church, and was attached to it, felt no disunion of spirit with me, in consequence of what had taken place. This also I regarded as a token of God's mercy; for, previous to this, I had been often tempted to think that, in consequence of my following the convictions of my conscience, my influence with her would be impaired, and my instructions no more prove of use. So far, however, from this being the case, she increasingly felt and owned the blessing of God as resting on her soul through my ministry, from this time till her death in the ensuing December. And I may further add that the whole of her spiritual conflicts, and the victories of her faith, during these months, proved to me like one impressive 'Yea and Amen' from the Lord, to the truth and power of that gospel which I had begun to realize. And herein I found the saying fulfilled, 'The plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed' (Amos ix. 13).

Immediately after the dissolution of my connection with the Establishment, I was reading with attention the concluding chapters in the Gospel of St. John. I remember I was stopped with a sore

conviction of the worldliness of my heart at this word, 'My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.' I was discomfited, and confessed my sin; but I think I know from long experience how that word would have flashed and thundered in my heart (or at least the truth embodied in it) had I set to my hand, by any worldly policy, to defend my own cause.

As I had rather expected beforehand, so in fact it proved. Several of my late congregation were actuated with a quiet, gentle spirit; and a large room was licensed, wherein, without any interruption, we continued to meet till, with far less trouble than I could have anticipated, several difficulties being unexpectedly obviated, a commodious chapel was erected in a very eligible situation. This, however, was not opened till the autumn of the ensuing year.

From the beginning of this time I felt myself exceedingly impressed with a sense of my critical situation and weighty responsibility, 'not without law to God, but under the law to Christ:' that is (as I mean to express), I felt that, though delivered from the restraints of human ecclesiastical authority, I lay under a deeper necessity of proving in all points the will of God respecting me. This kept me from light-mindedness; yet, when I began to realize his kind and gentle direction, I was often enabled to praise him for all that had happened. I saw that he had guided me through snares that, more distinctly in the review than in the prospect of them, appeared both numerous and entangling. I saw that my way had never once been hedged up, nor my feet turned back. Now, therefore I could say in a measure, My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and I am escaped (Psa. cxxiv. 7). Let no one say that because I apply this to a point not exclusively spiritual, therefore the application is wrong. For it is really wonderful how God in his wisdom and mercy combines our outward walk among men with our spiritual walk with him; so that we cannot divide them. If we lose the fear of God and the direction of his mercy in either of these, we lose it in them both. Contrariwise, when the Spirit of his holy fear preserves our outward walk, it brings us to spiritual communion with him: and his signal guidance through those difficulties in life, which entangle an enlightened conscience, strengthens faith, confirms hope, establishes love; and we enter into the power and feel something of the sweetness of Christ's words to the Philadelphians, 'Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name;' now then, 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out' (Rev. iii. 8, 12).

I cannot but anticipate that some will turn over the leaves of this little treatise, and, finding how frequently I insist on the necessity of humiliation before God, as well as a subdued patience before men, will be tempted to despise it altogether, as enforcing, in their idea, an abject and legal bondage of spirit. Some persons, who

never so much as question their own interest in the promises, will lightly set all this fear and tenderness at nought, nor imagine that I mean to describe any particular reality and power in that encouraging and strengthening hope and peace I described in the last paragraph. Whereas, truly, what I there express is of a more substantial nature than can be realized by any who have not so sunk in deep convictions of sin and weakness as to find the battle too hard for themselves, without the sensible manifestation of the arm of the Lord. As I observed in an early page (when considering Luther's Commentary on the Galatians), the power of faith is shown, not in strength of word, but in strength of victory, and therefore in strength of conflict; and it is when the enemy is subdued by the favour of God, as Samson rent the lion that roared against him, that we afterwards turn aside and find the honey, as he found it in the bleached carcase, the taste of which enlightens our eyes.

But to proceed with my account. I found that the religion which I had been made to feel in its power, and by the grace of God to maintain, was by no means agreeable to persons in general. I was not followed by those who mingle religion and politics, so as to excite disturbance or promote civil discord in the country; nor yet by those who contend for their civil and religious liberties (great blessings, I admit) with much more zeal and perseverance than they seek for the inheritance of glory. These are generally and fearfully deluded to imagine they have made as sure of that spiritual inheritance already as they need expect to be here: not knowing the power of that work of God which brought an apostle to testify that the righteous are scarcely saved (1 Peter iv. 18). I was thankful for the respite thus granted me, so that for a season at least I might rest from the bitter contention and strife of tongues; for I felt a gentle yet abiding power resting on me from these words, 'Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues' (Psa. xxxi. 20). Nor could I refrain from meditating at times in the following way,—These words are truly fulfilled in my case! Now also I endeavoured to lay hold of this as an opportunity given me of God for seeking a deeper entrance into his divine truth. It was not, I thank him, in vain; though I felt then, and feel yet, that the more we know, the more sensible we become of our ignorance and weakness in all directions, as Moses clearly discerned when, after a long and deep course of experience, he began his supplication for further mercy thus, 'Thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand.'

Now also feeling an increasing hope that the Lord confirmed me and would stand by me, and finding a freer utterance than heretofore, I laid aside all forms in prayer and written preparations for the pulpit. Sure I am, however, that I continued to feel that prayerful preparation for the exercise of my ministry was needful, by meditation on the scriptures; yes, and as Luther was wont

continually to declare, by temptations too. So that I could not even choose my own subjects to please myself or other men, so needful did I find it (and continue to find it) to come to the very answer of that spiritual prayer which I had scarcely ever repeated for many months before without a sensible unction in my heart: 'Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help,' &c. I must further observe here that, though I now found it right in my own case to lay forms aside, I do not mean in a sweeping manner to condemn them. My own experience of the power of God, which I had often felt in the use of them, while, by his will, I continued in the Establishment, and my regard for many, both ministers and private Christians, who have felt the same, and yet manifested that God was in them of a truth, forbid me to do this. All I shall add is, the Holy Ghost knows with infinite precision how to govern his church, and there are, and will be to the end of the world, diversities of operations. But if any pervert this, so as to quench any light of the Spirit's kindling in his heart, or to resolve to walk in the imagination of his own heart, let him be sure that his sin will find him out. The great point and the difficult point always is, to find and to maintain the power of spiritual life by the knowledge and communion of God: and without this we never really know whether our ways please the Lord at all, or whether we may not be in that 'way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death' (Prov. xiv. 12).

About the ensuing Christmas I began to feel myself called upon to take another step,—to form ourselves into a church, by the celebration of the Lord's supper. But I considered that the smallness of our numbers was itself an indication from God that there should not be any parade about external questions of church government; but that in all these things we should proceed step by step, as might or might not in future be called for; as indeed the primitive church did, when the number of the disciples was multiplied; not before. And now it was that I was again encouraged, by a powerful application of God's word to my heart, which brought me to a further understanding of the will of God concerning me, as one whom he called upon to exercise the office of shepherd in his fold. I was meditating on part of the prophecy of Zechariah, when my eye was arrested by the last verse of chapter xi, 'Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.' It seemed peculiarly striking to me at the moment, but the impression abode and deepened, till I was distinctly conscious that I had never before in all my life felt so penetrating a power in God's word. The effect was not joyous; but it was with a trembling sense of gratitude that I felt the words, as though they fell with the weight of a sledge hammer from heaven, beside me, but not upon me; for

by the mercy of God, though in great perplexity and weakness, I had been preserved from leaving the flock.

My reader may suppose that at such a time as this it was impossible even for our great adversary so to cloud my mind and to work upon the unbelief of my heart as to prevent me from glorifying God. I could not then repent that in much affliction I had held out, and firmly (though courteously as certainly became me) declined accepting the Bishop's repeated proposals, that I should leave my post for a time; and Lord Bexley's still more kind and indeed generous offers: and though to oppose the will and entreaties of others, who were near and dear relatives or familiar friends, had often wrung my heart with anguish, I now perceived that it pleased God to confirm me in the way I had taken; and to show me that indeed I had not acted without a sufficient cause. But I felt then, and I feel yet, that the effect of this was to be for the time to come, as well as for the time past. Kept I had been, but not by myself; and now should storms unforeseen arise, I was as weak as ever. Wherefore I prayed much to be enabled to prove to the end God's will respecting me: for to be called upon to be a shepherd, and then to prove only an idol shepherd; the authority of his arm to be clean dried up, and the eye of his spiritual discernment to be utterly darkened, it seemed to me, as indeed it is, such an intense and withering curse from God, that I dared not even to picture it in my imagination. Yet how many, as I deeply fear, are in this state already, and lay it not to heart: and how hardly I had been for several years escaping from it myself! How many neither know how to discern the real work of God's grace in any, nor to make any distinction between the precious and the vile, except perhaps in favour of the latter; yet are not in the least aware of their fearful condition. Nay, some of them will even plead for this desperate blindness, as the necessary result of Christian charity. Oh, the delusion! But, on the other hand, when I reflect on the small degree in which the Spirit dispenses this power and discernment to his earthen vessels, I feel a still deeper cause for humiliation and fear. Even the chiefest of his apostles has infallibly recorded his own occasional mistakes, in associating Demas with himself, and refusing Mark, while the first proved an apostate, and the last a profitable minister. How evidently blindness in part happened to many eminent servants of God at the time of the Reformation, as to Luther himself in his judgment of his Helvetic brethren: and in later ages how many have erred in the opposite extreme, even men like Whitfield for example, having in some instances received as converts, nay as ministers, those who seem to have shone only by a reflection of light from themselves. Wherefore I perceive this pastoral authority and discernment is a singular and rare gift from God, to be prized highly when granted even in the least measure. On the other hand, the clean and utter extinction of it is what every true shepherd will most humbly and anxiously

deprecate. The Lord of the harvest knows the weakness of his servants, and has told them once for all as one man, that they never can so separate the wheat from the tares, as to leave the wheat clear; and that he will never trust them to make the attempt, lest in many cases they should confound the two. But for his husbandmen to be found nurturing the tares and neglecting the wheat; for his shepherds to be feeding the goats and starving the sheep, this is fearful; and this is what they all proceed to do, as soon as the curse which we read in the prophet Zechariah enters their hearts. May God deliver the reader and the writer from so executing the office of a Christian shepherd, or from being entangled and misled by the false direction of such!

I have uniformly found, since I began to prove the nature of living faith, that a very diligent attention to all that God solemnly impresses on the heart, with deep humiliation and even fear (though the fear in this case quickens the hope), is the most excellent way; and those who walk according to this rule, find the testimony of the Lord's approbation by renewed and clearer tokens of his very present help in time of trouble: so that they 'eat the old store, and bring forth the old because of the new' (Lev. xxvi. 10). I thank him I found this myself, and received, about seven months after this, another special intimation of his will respecting me, which greatly enlarged my heart.

I was at this time very much perplexed with fears and forebodings in reference to a testimony which I found it needful to bear, by which I feared some might be greatly offended. Two or three days beforehand I was especially exercised with these fears; knowing, as the apostle James says, how great a matter a small fire sometimes kindles; and I very earnestly sought throughout that day to cast my burden really on the Lord: but I was so inwardly discouraged, that I described it in a little memorial in these words, 'I prayed in fear and perplexity, confusion and weakness, and found no comfort with it.' The next morning, as I was looking for a chapter in Chronicles, the Bible opened at Eccles. xi. I thought the words attracted me, but I was not then thinking of what had happened the day before, nor in the least expecting what I presently found. The passage was the whole of these words: 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether

shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good' (vers. 1–6).

Though it is not in my power to persuade those who do not already believe it, that there is such a thing as a positive application by God of his word to the heart of his spiritual worshippers (and I believe few knew less how to believe it than I myself, or have been more afraid of pretending to have it), yet I cannot forbear saying, that any one who felt what I did on that day, would believe it from thenceforward. When the words first arrested me they seemed very beautiful, and on considering them they became as clear as the light. I was the more struck with it, because I had often endeavoured in vain to understand their connection in time past. But now it was as though I said, 'Oh, I know what it all means! it means this;' and at the same time reading them through in a slight paraphrase to this effect: 'Scatter that precious seed the bread of eternal life abroad, on the face of many waters, or amongst many people: thou shalt find it after many days,—it shall not return void. Give a portion to as many as require it, and do not forebode evil in your fleshly wisdom. Do not the clouds everywhere and freely empty the rich moisture which they contain, on the earth? and is not the time in which God works in mercy, before the axe fells the tree of life? If you regard contingencies, wind and clouds, instead of fearing God, you will neither sow nor reap. You know not even the way of the spirit and growth of the members in carnal generation; how much less do you comprehend the Holy Spirit's work in the new creation of his people! Scatter that precious seed abroad, early and late: you know not which shall prosper most, but it shall be that which God blesses.' The words rested on my heart, and penetrated deeper and deeper, at each successive clause bringing to mind my former misgivings, and then overwhelmed them in a flood of light with ease and power; and the redoubling of the first injunction in the last, was more solemn than I can express. Wherever I went, the spiritual harmony followed me, and as if I might say that something of the beauty of the Lord God was in the words: my heart was enlarged and softened, and filled with the abounding of hope. I knew then what it is to walk in spiritual liberty. Nay, further, though I knew that this spiritual charge had an extended application to the whole of my subsequent ministry, yet I may here notice that the expression 'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight,' though merely a Hebrew idiom, so riveted the primary application to the circumstance which had first made me anxious, that, though I would rather not here explain how, it was very solemn to me: for it was as though the Lord would say, 'I know the things which come into your mind, every one of them.' I think it was nearly an hour after this began, before I perceived that it was the Lord's answer to my troubled prayers. This happened on the 17th of August, 1836, and a few weeks only before the opening of the chapel. Oh, I thought, a few drops of this heavenly

anointing is worth all the trouble and difficulty of finding it, and much more! it is impossible to remember the anguish, when the joy comes.

Yet I have found, and find increasingly, that as these things are causes for joy and thankfulness, they are causes for trembling too. The Lord has much to teach us which is not comfort, and it is the beggar from the dunghill whom he exalts (1 Sam. ii. 8). It is an awful thing to stand between the living and the dead, especially when overwhelmed with conviction on account of the body of death within us. The law in the hand of the Mediator is no light matter; and what David and Paul found it, we, if rightly led, must find it likewise. It was neither legal bondage, nor uncertainty in the doctrines of Christ's all-perfect mediation, which urged the apostle to fear lest haply after preaching to others he himself should be a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27); but it was the constraining power of the Spirit's humbling conviction in his heart.

Since the above took place it has pleased God to maintain my standing, and in a measure to deepen and confirm his work in me. I have preached, and, I thank him, not wholly in vain; now and then having received or imparted what I have reason to hope will stand; and several persons, besides those I have mentioned in this treatise, have died in the exercise, as far as appears, of living faith, who had been, especially at the last, under my particular instruction. But the number of my stated hearers has scarcely increased to this day; in some instances my hopes have been severely mortified; in some, long patience has been mercifully crowned with success; in many, I am made to wonder at the slowness of their heart, as well as my own, in believing. Some have come for a time and then gone back; and I have found with amazement that those very things which have been made to my own soul the most rich, unctuous, and consoling, have been darkness and stumblingblocks to them. Thus I am made to prove that 'a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven' (John iii. 27); neither can any, as ministers, work in the Lord's vineyard, except the Lord condescend to work with them (Mark xvi. 20, 2 Cor. vi. 1). Yet, on the whole, I must say his mercy showed toward me has been great, and the power of his hand great also; and while I am encouraged to raise an Ebenezer, I can truly express my feelings in the inspired words of David, 'O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place' (Psa. lxvi. 8–12).

CHAPTER IV.

An account of John Johnson, a tailor in Hertford, who died June 21, 1829, aged 32 years. Also the account of his friend J. E., presenting an instructive contrast to the former.

It was about the close of the summer of 1828 that I first heard of John Johnson. Though at that time I had some share both of religious knowledge and zeal, and often preached with fervour according to the letter of gospel truth, nevertheless I was only 'alive without the law.' I was resting upon my knowledge and zeal, i.e. on the foundation of my own works, though one of them was the professed renunciation of all confidence in works. The light in me never effectually discovered the root of spiritual sin in my heart, self-righteousness, pride, carnal enmity, worldly love, and unbelief: nor did such faith as I had bring into my soul the power and love of Christ, for it stood in man's wisdom (i.e. my own), and not in God's power.

I was therefore in no condition to be made an instrument in the hand of God for conveying the life and truth of his Spirit into the heart of another person. I neither could nor did in the instance I am about to record, though I am made to believe that God in a measure even then guided me, though I knew him not; and also made use of me in a secondary way to instruct one whom I believe now to be a king and a priest before his throne: but not (I repeat it again) as those ambassadors of Christ who have themselves received the mercy (Rev. i. 6).

I was informed by several persons, about the time I have mentioned above, that this poor man was ill, and not likely to recover. His illness was of a very painful nature, and though at that period he was not confined to the house, there were indications of a gathering abscess in the knee-joint, which it was expected would ultimately prove fatal. Those who mentioned his case to me were very anxious that I should go and see him, and endeavour to turn his mind to religion, especially his next door neighbour, who, though not religious herself, repeatedly called to beg me to converse with him, saying, 'He is not likely to live long, but is not aware of his danger, and seems to have no thought of another world.' The particular anxiety of his neighbours rather astonished me, and gave some weight to the case in my own mind.

However, after I had once seen him, I ceased to feel surprise on this account, for I found his appearance, manner, and disposition so pleasing, and his conversation so intelligent that none could form his acquaintance without feeling a particular regard for him; yet

I never conversed with any one who seemed more resolved (though with much courtesy) not to be talked into religion. His buoyancy of spirits made him shun the idea of melancholy reflection, and probably his intelligence enabled him to discern that many who make a high profession say much more than they really feel, which may have excited some disgust in his mind. I soon observed in him a disposition to evade my visits, and I think that more than once I was met at the door by his wife with an apology, which I considered as an excuse, for not seeing me.

One Sunday afternoon I made a further effort, and, as I entered the house he lodged in, met him coming down the steps from his chamber. A cloud passed over his countenance which I well understood; but he, not wishing to be guilty of rudeness, asked me up-stairs, and said he would postpone his intention of walking out. He seemed to me for once to set himself to the task of fairly hearing what I had to say, and to answer me as well as he could. I am ashamed when I consider my own unfitness at that time for the work I so eagerly engaged in. I used indeed often to begin to fear that I was talking beyond my depth, and, as it were, setting forth a God unknown to myself; but before this fear gathered force, or rather to prevent its doing so, I would, with eager zeal, speak afresh, and, if I could say anything affecting or forcible, would conclude I had done a good thing. On the present occasion my conversation with Johnson, as far as I can recollect, was very general. I assured him that he ought to attend to religion, that it was highly dangerous to neglect it, that it was necessary he should believe in Jesus Christ, for his own works could not save him. On the other hand, he showed me by his answers that he had entirely neglected the Bible, and was exceedingly careless and ignorant indeed. However, he added, 'I assure you I do sometimes read good books; I was reading this one (handing me Taylor's Life of Christ) this Sunday morning before you came, and I suppose it is the same thing to read this as to read the Bible, for, being the life of Christ, it must be taken out of the Bible.' Thus it appeared plain that he had never been made to tremble at the word of God, much less to find eternal life in it; and was as far as possible from any spiritual discernment to detect the unscriptural character of that work of Bishop Taylor's, whose legal, pharisaical, and indeed semi-Popish principles are conspicuous throughout the whole of it.

I know not how it happened; but I remember before we parted I felt a persuasion that a few things I had said had fallen with some weight upon his mind, and I found from that day forward a measure of frank cordiality in his manner, as if he felt really glad to see me. His disorder increased, and confined him to his room, and, after a month or two, to his bed; but he appeared, almost from that very time, to begin with some marks of serious attention to read the Bible.

In this account I must speak of myself according to the perception

I now have of my state of mind at that time; not as I should then have suspected, for I knew nothing at that time of the deceitfulness of my heart, nor detected any of those spiritual sins, the springing up of which now engages my heart in daily confession and prayer for God's mercy in Christ. I allude to the deadly pride which is felt by one placed as I then was, which I distinctly know to have worked, though I did not acknowledge it to myself. The concern and attention of this man surprised and pleased me; I did really desire his happiness, yet rather sought how I might approve myself to him and others as an able minister, than how to bring my own case and his before the Lord continually for light and direction from him. Thus many feelings of vanity passed through my mind, unacknowledged, unconfessed, and unpurged. These things, and many such like, would every day bring the devouring fire upon us, if it were not for the mediation of Jesus Christ; and should never be mentioned except in the spirit of God's holy fear. However, nothing very observable appeared further in Johnson at that time; and early in October, 1828, I went to visit my friends in Shropshire, and continued there till the middle of November.

A trial awaited me there, in the gradual decline and death of a relation to whom I was greatly attached. I am conscious at times of having felt a certain measure of awe and tenderness which I am willing to hope was through grace; and I returned home in a more serious frame than I had left it, and with a deeper impression from these words than I had ever felt in my life, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart' (Eccles. vii. 2). However, I have reason to add, with shame, that I was soon filled again with spiritual ignorance and the pride of religious knowledge.

During the weeks of my absence Johnson appears to have been visited by the mighty hand of God, and thrown into a state of great alarm on account of his sins, and lest he should never be saved. His wife urged him to send and enquire for me, that if I were returned I might immediately come and comfort him; but he refused to follow her advice. He afterwards acknowledged that this was through pride, not choosing that I should witness his fear and distress. At last, however, his anguish increasing, he sent her to my house himself, where she received for answer that I was still from home, and the time of my return uncertain. After this, he sent repeatedly to enquire for me, and received the same answer, which became an aggravation to his fears; for he thought it was a judgment from God on account of his sins, and a token that he should never find mercy. But being thus cut off from the hope of help from me, he was led, according to his subsequent account, to earnest and continual prayer, and, after some time, he found encouragement and hope to spring up in his mind, accompanied with much light in the word of God, which became very precious to

him, and was his most constant companion from that time up to the day of his death.

On my return home, hearing a report of these things, I went as soon as I was able to see him. He welcomed me most cordially, and related with tenderness and simplicity the trouble he had passed through since we had met, and the happy issue of it. I did not understand the nature of this spiritual work upon his heart, but still remember that his words left in me a very deep, serious impression of sobriety and truth. I was not able to ask any distinctive questions, and therefore can give the reader no distinctive account, which I now greatly regret; and I have endeavoured since to supply this defect, though without much success. All I have been able to recover from the confused recollections of his widow, is this:—that his trouble seemed to get stronger and stronger till a certain night, when, on her awaking, he told her that he was very happy, and that his comfort had come to him with an impression of a great light from heaven, which at first he wondered she had not been conscious of. This made him very often dwell upon the 26th of the Acts, 'I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun,' and to express great delight in it.

I will proceed to give what I believe to be a strong evidence that the change in him was produced by the efficacious grace of God, though it shows as strongly my own spiritual blindness at that time. I remember that I could not feel any increased sympathy or unity of heart with him, but rather the contrary, as though he were set at an increased distance from me. I had both loved and respected him, and now, from my own principles, felt bound in conscience to love him still more; but I found I could not, though I was not able to explain why. The truth was, that those very transactions he described, which had brought him to feel God as present in favour with himself, rather estranged him from me, I having had no knowledge of this secret of the Lord's presence. I was aware (though I would hardly acknowledge it even to myself) that he was describing what I could not understand, nor could my efforts bring me to enter into it, yet all he said was very simple; the reason being this, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. ii. 14). Though this conviction pressed me, I someway deceitfully shrunk from it, through the unbrokenness of my heart, that I might keep fair in my own eyes and maintain my false peace. I do not wish to make a display of confessing these evils; but am not without hope that my words may give a salutary wound to some reader who may be in the state I then was.

It cannot surprise any one that, in such a state of heart, I endeavoured during all my visits to make the conversation as general as possible. I read much to him out of the scriptures, and when he tried to express the deep feelings which had followed his meditation on particular passages, I admired them as well as I was able with him; but never probed his heart, never endeavoured to trace the

operation of God's Spirit there, for I had no knowledge of it myself. I paid some attention to his expressions of joy and confidence, but little regarded those betokening brokenness of heart and deep abasement before God. Finding myself encompassed with difficulties, and being afraid (I am sorry to add) of his discovering this, I forbore to visit him as often as he expected; for which neglect, being at times pressed in conscience, I would return to him for duty's sake.

Even at that time I thought one feature in his religion a strong evidence of its reality; and I think so yet, and am often astonished at the recollection of it. This was the power, depth, and fulness he often, or rather daily, used to find in the scriptures. It was clear from what I related in the beginning, that at the time of my first visit he neither knew nor revered them; but from the month of November, 1828, till his death the following June, his whole heart was engaged in prayer and meditation upon them. He searched all parts of them, and seemed everywhere to meet with instruction, even in some of the abstruser parts of the Old Testament, which might have been supposed to be unintelligible to one in his state, especially as the subject was quite new to him. Surely this was his special mercy, that though he had not the advantage of a spiritual minister, God made him wiser than his teachers; yet granted him such simplicity that he never seemed to be aware of his superior attainment himself. On one occasion I found him, as I may say, lost in the contemplation of part of the first chapter of Colossians. It now appears very plain to me that a singular light from God had shone upon it in his heart; and I remember words failed him to describe it. 'But this was it, sir,' he said, 'this was it!' pointing with his finger to this verse, 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross.' At another time he said, 'I have been employed in reading the Minor Prophets through for some time past; but I came to one verse in the third chapter of Zephaniah, and was not able to pass it for the whole day, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."' I never found him to labour more than on this occasion to explain to me what he had found in these words, and the effects which had followed. But where heart answers not to heart, as face to face in the water, such labour is mostly in vain; yet not always quite in vain, which I am willing to hope was the case then. For I remember the fixed persuasion I felt, that there was some power of God in the impression of these words upon him; so that I was not moved by the insinuation of a friend, that this impression was only the warmth of a devout imagination. I remember also that I continued to connect him with these words as long as he lived, and when he died, preached his funeral sermon upon them; yet for all this, I did not enter into the glory of them.

He often expressed great concern for the good of those who came

to see him: amongst the rest for his neighbour, who in the beginning had expressed much concern for him (as already related). After his conversion he used to try to persuade her to listen with seriousness to his words, but quite in vain. She remained utterly insensible, till his company became quite intolerable to her; and whenever she came in to help his wife, would contrive to make her visits as short as possible. He informed me of this himself with much tenderness, and begged me to speak to her, which I very readily did, but without the least effect. I remember reflecting on the circumstance. 'Poor woman (I thought) how blind and self-deceived! After being so earnest that your neighbour should become religious, unable to endure his company now he has really become so!' Yet for all this, I never considered at the time with fear and anxiety for myself, that substantially my case scarcely differed from hers.

I remember often having observed with surprise (not then knowing the tokens of the true work of grace) that his frames of mind were so exceedingly variable, that I never could be sure beforehand in what channel his conversation would run. When he felt the actings of a lively faith and the peace of God in his conscience, he was unmoved by pain or anxiety; but I often found him in a low distressed state, from a sense of sin and an inability to realize the consolations of the Spirit; and when this was the case he could never conceal what he felt, but would sometimes shed tears, and was entirely unmoved by such arguments as I was able to offer for his encouragement. In consequence of the spiritual blindness of my own soul I looked upon all this as a proof of weakness and want of establishment in him; and I never knew how to examine the causes of these repeated changes, which, however sullied they might sometimes have been through the workings of legal bondage or temptation, were without any doubt in the main effected by the secret power of God, graciously opening to him the depths of his sin, and bringing him to lay his hand on his mouth, and to put his mouth in the dust.

When his illness increased, his joys at times rose higher. His spirit seemed to be like a bird let loose; and by the kindness of God to him, many little things which otherwise would only have diverted his mind, helped forward his spiritual communion. Several times, when all means failed to give him bodily ease, has he sent his wife to request a handful of flowers out of my garden, and has assured me afterwards (not, I think, without tears of gratitude) that, looking at these for hours together, he has been so impressed with the feeling of the wisdom, power, and mercy of God, that he entirely forgot his pain.

As the spring of 1829 advanced he gradually declined, and for the last six weeks of his life his sufferings were very great. At times he became insensible and had strong convulsion fits, in which more than once he was expected to die. In one which was unusually

severe his wife thought him in the last extremity; he appeared entirely insensible to all outward objects, and his features expressed great agony. Beyond the expectation of his friends he revived again, and his wife expressing her grief at the severity of his pain, he surprised her by answering, 'Really I felt no pain at all. I was more happy than I can express. I was only conscious enough to suppose that I was dying, and I kept inwardly smiling to myself at the thought.'

I began to feel a regard for him; and, indeed, a reverence and esteem which altered the character of my visits. His conversation affected me deeply, and at times when he could not speak, I enjoyed sitting by his bed-side in silence. Whenever on entering his room I found him in such a serious frame that he could scarcely notice me, I was glad that I went; but if he met me with a lively smile, as much as to say, 'Come and enter into my joy,' I wished I could have left the room unperceived. On Sunday, the 21st of June, the last scene approached. As soon as the evening service was over, I went to his room, and my nearest relation accompanied me, who felt an interest kindred to mine. He was already past all power of speech, and was at times greatly convulsed; but we continued silently watching him, without in the least shrinking from the scene, till some time past midnight, when he slowly expired. I feel an increasing hope that the mercy of God, whom I then knew not, guided me in all these things, and I was not entirely destitute of the spirit of prayer. Now also I felt these words a second time, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.'

Johnson had a friend whose name was J. E., a man about the same age and of the same trade with himself, and they had worked together. He was a man of quick parts, but of far less solidity of mind than Johnson. Being exceedingly fond of lively conversation, he had eagerly mixed with profligate and infidel companions, by whose influence and the influence of the books they had recommended him to read, his imagination had become polluted, and his outward conduct immoral. As long as he was in good health he gloried in being an infidel; when visited with sickness he had repeatedly been the subject of horror and remorse. About three months after Johnson's conversion this man was seized with a violent inflammation on the lungs. His illness became almost desperate, and threatened, should he even survive the immediate crisis, to issue in a rapid consumption, to which he had been pre-disposed. Being a single man, and utterly prodigal in his health, he was now so destitute that he was removed to the parish workhouse. The terror of his mind was beyond all former precedent; he cried out, even as he was carried through the street, that he was lost for ever, without the least gleam of hope. He uttered his despair aloud to every one

who came near him, which struck horror into the hearts of several. Johnson heard the account, and immediately sent to entreat me to go to his friend E.; and accordingly I went.

The scene was a very awful one. He seemed almost in the agony of death, while strongly and repeatedly declaring that he had no hope; that he had sinned beyond all possibility of mercy, and knew that he must die and be lost. I begged him to compose himself and to listen to me. I told him that his friend Johnson had found mercy, who in times past used to enjoy his licentious conversation, and who now desired me to come to him to point out to him the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, &c. He became silent and listened to me. I was encouraged to speak very freely and particularly: I felt no reserve and no embarrassment. I told him that the way of access was still open, that he must confess his sins and pray for mercy, for that God would save every one that believed in Jesus Christ. He thanked me most passionately for coming to see him, and told me that the circumstance encouraged him to seek for God's mercy as I had directed him, but that his hope was next to none.

I felt very sanguine respecting him, and was surprised to find that I could speak much more freely to him than I could to Johnson. I visited him very frequently, and after each visit he thanked me profusely, and assured me that my conversations had done him good. The horror of his mind was speedily dissipated; he began to drink in my instructions with avidity: he said he prayed fervently, and his hopes were continually raised higher and higher. He exhibited many marks of conscientious tenderness, which of course encouraged me greatly. Several persons who came to see him expressed their astonishment at the change.

He continued for some time exceedingly ill; and I expressed a wish that he might receive the sacrament, as I hoped, considering his earnest desire for mercy and great remorse for his past sins, it might prove to him a blessing. At first he expressed some hesitation, but after a while he consented, and spoke afterwards of having received much spiritual consolation. I could hardly satisfy his eager desire that I would come, read the scriptures, explain them, pray, and set forth the freeness and sufficiency of the grace of God. Also the affection he expressed for me was beyond measure great.

Contrary to all expectation, he began to recover. At this he expressed keenly the most poignant regret; for he assured me he had looked forward to the moment of death not only without dread, but with the most lively joy; and could not bear the thought of returning back to the world. He continued during his recovery devoted to religion, and expressed great delight in the hope of uniting in public worship with those who believed the gospel, and especially of seeing his old friend Johnson, who was now of one mind with him in religion, as formerly in irreligion.

I observed a difference between him and Johnson, which would now have appeared to me of more consequence than it did then. As he began to get better his continual desire was to study difficult questions in religion, and to apply to me for their solution. Also he received all I said so implicitly, that his mind seemed entirely at rest after the conversation; and I recollect, on one occasion, an engagement calling me from home for a day or two, I called beforehand that he might know the reason of my temporary absence. Upon which he passionately exclaimed that he wished he might by any means be able to accompany me, for that my absence, even for so short a time, was very distressing to him.

Johnson was highly gratified by hearing from me so favourable an account of his friend, and looked forward with much interest to the time of their meeting. As soon as E. was able to walk they met accordingly, and conversed some time together. Johnson's hopes fell. He found no stability nor sobriety of mind, no fixedness of view in E., but a flighty imagination, unbroken heart, and fleshly admiration of persons. I went as soon as possible to Johnson to learn the issue of the interview. He was pensive, almost in tears, and hardly spoke. I said, 'You have seen E., have you not?' 'Yes, sir,' he replied, shaking his head, 'nothing there, I fear.'

The event too fully justified Johnson's fears. E. began to show less and less consistency. At times his convictions used to return with some force, and he would come to me in considerable agitation, but it began to appear manifest that his heart was not estranged from his former idols. He was gradually drawn away, and after a lapse of some months studiously endeavoured to avoid a personal interview with me. I have observed him frequently at a distance turn short round or slip aside the instant he caught sight of me. Lately I contrived, though not without difficulty, to detain him in conversation, but he seemed to me to be utterly given up to darkness of heart and blind self-sufficiency.

In looking back to the events I have now recorded, I believe I have received instruction, and have been made to understand many things which confounded me at the time and for long afterwards. I am persuaded there was the greatest possible difference between the religion of these two men, and am astonished to consider the different or rather opposite nature of the impressions I indelibly received from each.

In my state of mind at that time I was unable in any measure to trace religious affections to their source, that I might distinguish those which are truly spiritual from those which are merely natural. For instance, I judged that great terror was in all cases a hopeful commencement; not then perceiving that there is no necessary connection whatever between great terror and a broken heart. Thus I immediately judged favourably of E.'s case; and when I found that he received the word of God, i. e. the letter of it as

delivered by me, I was led at once to suppose that this was the result of true faith. Further, I did not then feel the infinite difference between the faith which stands in man's wisdom, and the faith which stands in God's power (1 Cor. ii. 5). In all that E. said there was abundant proof of the existence of the first of these, no trace whatever from first to last of the second. He rested on me, sought for help and comfort from me, he looked no further: and faith which was natural proved quite strong enough to remove fears which were natural likewise. His trouble was not of such a nature as to keep him fixed in heart through prayer to look for deliverance from Christ, but was easily moved by my testimony alone; and afterwards he was readily diverted to dwell upon mere niceties and resolve difficulties, because for want of some discovery of real communion with God in Christ, this sort of employment was the only religious exercise he knew anything about. Hence his conversation, though it embraced some truths, became in reality nothing more than what the apostle Peter defines as great 'swelling words of vanity.' In all this I believe that he did not intentionally deceive either me or himself; but the whole of this sort of religion is distinct in kind as well as degree from that which springs from the spiritual teaching of God. I never saw in him one trace of tender humiliation; I never saw his own natural understanding confounded, as it is in those whose fear and trouble being caused by the grace of the Holy Spirit, urge them still to be looking after help from the Lord, though they cannot readily find it, and though carnal men and evil spirits combine to strengthen the unbelief of their heart by this continual taunt, 'Where is now thy God?'

Had I understood this spiritual secret myself at that time, I think I could not have been at all deceived by this man, but should have rather feared that he was deficient in the most important features of the work of grace. I should have said of his trouble, I only see in it the sorrow of the world which worketh death; I should have said of his deliverance, It results only from a diversion of his mind. I should have perceived that he neither saw nor heard anything higher than me and my word; and that his regard for me was not for Christ's sake, seeing he gave no proof that he either knew or regarded Christ.

And it is an awful though certain truth, that whenever a man is deceived by this false confidence which is grounded only in man's testimony, the more perfect his confidence is, the more certain is his delusion. In E.'s case, as already related, it was most perfect, as, so far from fearing death, he expressed bitter mortification that he began to recover. And I believe the source of this was that he had no perception at all of what in fact did not exist, the presence and power of God in his conversion, and therefore felt that his religion would lose its power as soon as the immediate excitement which produced it was withdrawn, as indeed it came to pass.

With Johnson the case was very different indeed. His words were few and simple; and often when he gave proof that he felt the most, he could say the least. His weakness and fears, which were only overcome by much prayer, I regarded at the time (as I have said before) as proofs of want of establishment: but only because I then understood not what the Lord taught Jacob when it is said, he put forth his hand and touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and it was out of joint as he wrestled with him (Gen. xxxii. 25). For even so, if there be the real approach to God, his strength must be perfected in our weakness alone. And wherever any out of this weakness are made strong, then will they say, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake' (Psa. cxv. 1).

And as there was a very decided contrast between these two men, so also were my own impressions respecting them at the time and since very opposite also.

I may say (judging by my inward feelings) that I myself gave to E. all the religion he ever had. I seem to have imparted to him my own spirit, my faith, my view of scripture and of God—that is, all I had of these at the time; so that all the fire within him was of my own kindling, and he was in the strictest sense my own convert; and may God of his mercy yet grant that the conclusion of our Lord's words may not be finally verified in him, the commencement of which were but too applicable to myself, 'Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves' (Matt. xxiii. 15).

My feelings respecting Johnson were just opposite. I was even at the time conscious that I imparted nothing to him. I directed his understanding, indeed, but my words never kindled in his heart; nor was it the faith in me which passed to him, as where it pleases God to use a human instrument for the effectual conversion of any one *. This I was even aware of at the time, and it was rendered the more manifest from the fact of my having been providentially removed from interference with him when the grace of God first began effectually to work in his heart. Since I have been brought to any measure of acquaintance with the real work of God, I have been thankful to him many times for so mercifully ordaining this matter. For though no human arm can hinder the accomplishment of the Lord's pleasure, the officious ignorance of untaught professors is in his righteous judgment allowed to mar his work for a season, more perhaps than any other interference; as we may be well convinced by the vehement warnings of the apostle Paul to the Galatians, who were beset by such characters.

Indeed it is a serious truth, that whenever the real convictions of

* In order to enable the reader further to trace the distinction here referred to, Mr. Gilpin's own careful recital of the case of Joseph Boalter (upon whom his word as Christ's minister was made effectual) has been inserted at some length in the next Chapter.

the Spirit begin to lay hold of any one, the devil, if permitted, will rage most by bringing in false teachers. The subjects of this grace of God being then in deep anxiety and longing for relief are too easily persuaded to listen to them. These will probably strive to bring them to rest upon a faith which stands in man's wisdom, thus seeking to overpower all those feelings of weakness, fear, confusion, inability, and danger which the Lord has himself wrought in their hearts, to bring them through all perseverance in prayer to find the true help of grace, and finally to establish their souls on the Rock of Ages.

This was the snare from which this poor man was graciously delivered by my timely removal from him, although both before and afterwards it was the will of God that I should in some measure instruct him, and the will of God likewise to mortify in him that spirit of pride which at first urged him to be independent of any human instructor. For God will fulfil his own word, 'Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein' (Luke xviii. 17). But he made me sensible through all (though it was long before I unreservedly acknowledged it) that I had no power to comprehend the work of his divine Spirit; that it was entirely independent of me, nor had been wrought through me, as where the apostle says to the Corinthians, 'Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel' (1 Cor. iv. 15).

And now, in conclusion, I desire to feel and to express sincere gratitude to God for his great mercy vouchsafed me, in preserving me through my blindness and perverseness to come to a measure of his true light, which shows me the difference between the ministration of the letter and the ministration of the Spirit.

CHAPTER V.

1835-1837. Commencement of the diary—Visit to Mrs. Judd—Power in the word—Goes to see the new chapel—Opening of the chapel—Prayer, especially in the prospect of changing his residence—Joseph Boalter.

Nov. 18. If thou, O Lord, wilt indeed be with me, I shall be able to stand, and to overcome also. Enemies without and within—the world, the flesh, and the devil; yet, Lord, thy power is invincible. Enable me to set thee always before me, to walk in thy fear all the day long. O send out thy light and thy truth.

Dec. 16. O Lord, I am filled with confusion and fear while I consider myself, the invincible, interminable sin of my heart, united with such hardness and insensibility as amazes me. I am willing to believe, and at times do believe, that which discerns this evil is not flesh, but spirit.

I cannot help feeling that thou hast been very gracious, and hast covered me with thy hand. I have thought I had a little feeling of the meaning of that pavilion wherein thou keepest thy people from the strife of tongues. I think also I discern thy strong arm in holding me fast during a long public trial, and now in secretly clearing my way. Thou hast opened a very little door for me, which no man has been able to shut. Thou hast given me a sense of the power and fulness of thy word. Thou hast made me desirous at all times of pouring out my heart before thee. I cannot help owning that in some degree thou hast kept me in peace, and maintained my hope,—a hope both of salvation and of thy protection and guidance through this ensnaring world. Thou hast given me cause to thank thee in that I am remembered (and many of my hearers also) in the prayers and affections of some of thy faithful people. Also for the communion of heart I have felt with Mrs. Judd*, who, though poor and solitary, knows well the visitation of thy Spirit. Notwithstanding all this, thou hast tried me, and those with me. Thou hast tried me in my family with the unexpected death of a dear child of fair promise; the second we have lost. The blow has been most overwhelming to my dear wife; but thou hast maintained thy fear in her heart, which is a heritage better than of sons and daughters; and I cannot refrain from blessing thee, and praying, Lord, though we destroy ourselves, give us grace to find that our help is in thee, for thy mercy's sake in Christ.

Dec. 18. I went with my wife and two friends to visit Mrs. Judd. She said, 'How is the child?' I said, 'The Lord has removed him.' She replied, 'Several times last week, and the beginning of this week, this thought was impressed upon me, Pray that these bereavements may be sanctified. I wondered what it meant, and said, Lord, on whom are these bereavements? Now I shall hear of death somewhere.' She spoke this with much simplicity and feeling, and my wife and I were both encouraged by it; for she said she had been made to pray very earnestly. Her conversation was exceedingly profitable: she described a very interesting though painful exercise of mind she had had about ten days before, wherein she had been left to feel her abject weakness to the very uttermost. She said there was no fury of the enemy, and no help from God, but a sinking lower and lower as if to hell, and no hold to keep her up. Surely it was a horror of great darkness which fell upon her. It appears she was not effectually relieved till the next morning, when being left quite alone and attempting to get through her household work,

* See Memoir of Hannah Judd by Mr. Gilpin.

her burden of soul appeared too great to bear, and it was suggested to her, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' She had grace to do it, and the Lord broke in upon her soul with unutterable sweetness and power, and made her believe indeed that he loved her, and would save her to the end.

1836. *Feb.* 29. I had an evening meeting with some of my people. I never felt more fully satisfied that the Lord worked amongst them. The simplicity, and the power, and the fear of the Lord, expressed by several, was very striking. Alas, what a block I felt myself! Hardness in my spirit, contraction, unbelief, pride, presumption, and I know not what besides. The word I took was, 'Only acknowledge thine iniquity,' &c. (Jer. iii. 13); but that 'only' is too much for me. The Lord the Spirit cry in me.

March 2. I have much reason to be thankful that the Lord at times gives a sweetness and a power to his word which I can hardly express. It quickens me to fear, and makes my dark heart seem darker, and my hard and worldly spirit appear worse; yet there is something in me which takes hold of the word and finds life and nourishment in it. This morning I did feel something of what I describe in reading the greater part of the first nine chapters of Proverbs, especially chapters v, vi, vii, and viii. I think I realized their searching power; and I could say 'Amen' when I read these words, 'All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.'

In the evening Mr. W. Maydwell called. He described the changes in his mind, the destruction to which he had been turned, and the return to life, with such simplicity and power, that I felt his words penetrate and search my heart. I see the need of this soul-emptying faith, but the pain of it is greater than we can stand. 'Who may abide the day of his coming?'

Sept. 12. For several days past I have had much reason to thank God for his merciful dealing with my dear wife. On Saturday she had a blessed encouragement of soul, from a near view of Christ and his spiritual presence. She went with me to see the new chapel. Everything respecting it was exceedingly to our mind; and I must say all this added to the weight on my spirit. I believe I cried much in spirit, that the Lord would not suffer a smooth exterior to lull us into deceitful security, or into pride and spiritual barrenness. I ascended Port Hill with her to see a piece of ground on which the builder thought he could erect a suitable house for us. Though I long to remove her to an elevated spot, I became exceedingly cloudy in my mind, and was afraid of the secular part of the affair, lest we should engage in worldly scheming; and I [illegible] me thankfulness that the plan seemed on examination to be able.

[illegible] knowest me better than I know myself. Wilt thou [illegible] Christ, and blot out my sins, and work mightily

giving me that spirit which thou hast imparted to thy faithful ministers,—patience, longsuffering, faith, hope, and charity? I need them all. I can never produce them in myself. This I know, that I can but destroy myself except thou be pleased to appear as my Help. I thought to-day I could begin in prayer, Art thou not my Father? Oh, if this were thy Spirit's whisper, abundantly confirm it for Christ's sake! Amen.

Oct. 8. Yesterday evening I opened Port Vale Chapel, and preached from the 66th Psalm, 'Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me:' referring also to the methods by which God teaches and perfects this work of mercy, set forth at large in that Psalm, 'Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried,' &c. And through all this God brings his people 'into a wealthy place.' This wealthy place is verily spiritual enlargement in Christ. The Lord forbid that we should take up our rest here, in any outward benefits he has conferred upon us.

Yet, Lord, I can only say as follows:—Thy mercy was great, but my sin unutterable! Thou art witness to the folly, vanity, emptiness, pride, worldliness of my heart! O deal not with us after our sins, but bring in Christ in the power of his arm, and in the love of his heart, to humble, cleanse, save! Amen.

Dec. 26. I feel great reason to express my gratitude to God for his gentleness and longsuffering, though I am too much as a horse or mule, or as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. I know but little; and often in conversation with the best instructed of my people feel I am the learner and not the teacher. But still I find that the Lord does teach me, and gives me grace to walk in his fear, not handling the word of God deceitfully; and I find a progress, though a slow one, and more in realizing my deficiencies than in actual attainments. May it please God to bless me and mine, and crown the work of his hand with his special mercy. May he grant that no weapon formed against us may prosper. And may he enable us to take encouragement from his past mercies, and to encourage others; and now and henceforth to set up a true Ebenezer, and to say, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' for Christ's sake. Amen.

1837. *March* 15. Wilt thou hear me, Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake? Wilt thou grant thy blessing and protection outwardly, that in the worldly engagements before us relative to changing our house [from Hertingfordbury, near Hertford, to which place he had removed after resigning his living], we may be preserved from the spirit of the world, and enabled to seek first thy kingdom and righteousness? Wilt thou give me wisdom; for I am before thy people, and know not how to go out or come in? It is the character of the faithful shepherd who entereth in by thee as the door, that he goeth before the sheep. Wilt thou give me this grace, day by day? Oh, grant it me! My desire is, if I may pray it with that 'nevertheless' which is taught us by thee (Luke xxii. 42), that

I may be preserved from snares and worldly entanglements; that thou wouldest mercifully fix the bounds of our habitation, blessing and overruling our exertions so that we may be well settled, but not in the spirit of the worldling, who says, 'Soul, take thine ease.'

June 2. I have been several times rather struck in visiting JOSEPH BOALTER, who is dying, and sent for me. He at one time made a profession of religion, being member of a chapel, from which, however, on account of his misconduct, he was separated. He had, I believe, previously been made conscious of his own formality and that of others; but after this he became entirely reckless and took to drinking, and lately kept a beer-house. He tells me his conscience was never easy at this, and last autumn he gave it up, and went to his present house at Wallfields, and was soon afterwards seized with paralysis and consumption.

At my first visit I found him apparently groping after an efficacious religion, convinced he had never had it. I was much struck with the simple emphasis with which he described his state. 'Oh, it is dangerous,' he said; 'I have had much fear, but very little hope!' He seems much in prayer, and to discern something of the need of a truly broken heart. His father having given him Bunyan's sermon on that subject, he said to me, 'I think it is for lack of this that the religion of many is so empty.' I read to him (to-day) a part of my Memoir of Samuel Dack* [a case very similar to his own, and they had formerly been gay companions together], and this led to my conversing with him on the 33rd chapter of Job, 'He looketh upon men,' &c. After a while he said, 'The Lord cannot look upon me, for I have profaned his body and his blood; I have taken them without understanding.' I said, 'Consider now this passage, "If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."' The observation seemed to strike him. Also in opening the 107th Psalm, I thought the Lord was present, for its whole substance seemed in a measure to be felt as I spoke. These things cause me to hope and watch and pray that the Lord will be pleased to work.

June 6. This evening I called, and felt more encouragement still. 'I looked for you all day yesterday.' I said, 'Why did you want to see me?' 'Because your words have enlightened me on this point, that we can only pray as we want. I never attended to that before.' I said, 'Can you pray?' 'Yes, sir, and David when encompassed with trials could only cry to the Lord; but my trouble increases. I feared this morning I was going to everlasting destruction.' I said, 'Now it is your only way to cry to the Lord, cry like the woman of Canaan, though he should seem to take no notice, or seem even to discourage you; for if the trouble increases, he does so far discourage us, and I know we shall find this: but cry on, and see now if he will not turn, and have mercy upon you; and if so, you will know it and be saved. Remember what is written, "When a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." So must you look to the Lord Jesus as you cry: there

* An Account of the Last Illness and Death of Samuel Dack, of Hertford, who died Oct. 29, 1833, by Mr. Gilpin, was published in the *Gospel Standard* for the year 1860.

is no other hope. Leave everything else, and thus cry. Do you remember what you read about the broken heart? Well now, the heart must be broken; but I dare say you will not tell me that your heart seems broken.' 'Oh, no, sir!' he replied, with great emphasis. His earnestness and increased discernment of his danger made me feel a stronger hope that the hand of the Lord was upon him.

June 8. 'My sin seems to get worse and larger.' 'Your past sins only, or your present sins?' 'My present sins.' 'What do you do?' 'Sir, I cry, cry, cry, "What shall I do to be saved?"' 'Do you remember the answer Paul and Silas gave to the jailor of Philippi, who had just before misused them cruelly and had resolved to kill himself, showing that he was as far from being right as you are; yet when he feared and trembled and said, "What shall I do to be saved?" they answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now you, in your trouble, must look and pray that the Lord would grant you that faith. What a mercy it is that the Lord enables you to cry thus!'

Afterwards, referring to his feelings and prayers some years ago when he made a profession, he said, '*Now* I cannot pray; it is all confusion; I only cry on, and have nothing to depend on.' 'Then,' I said, 'you must come empty to the Lord.' 'Yes, empty; if the Lord will have mercy upon me through Jesus Christ, who came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' 'I am glad to hear it, for Jesus Christ says that he came to seek and save "that which was lost." You were never "lost" before. Does anything comfort you out of the word of God?' 'Yes, sir, here and there some word which seems to describe what I feel.' I then read to him Psalms cxxx and cxxiii, and commented upon Psalm cvii, 'They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man; and all their wisdom is swallowed up. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses' (verses 27, 28, *margin*). 'Oh, thank you for coming to see me! I doubt if you had not I should have been going on in my own way, which was not safe.' 'No; and if I were now to say your state is safe it would do you no good; nor could I say so, for your case is desperate; and the case of all who are saved is desperate. Be sure now hearken not to the enemy, who will try and keep you from praying. He will say it is too late, and you are too wicked; but do not believe one word, listen to nothing which keeps you from praying; for God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. David was in the depths like you, and could not see the Lord, and says, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." It is now dark night with you; remember David's direction, to follow it.' I then prayed with him, and left him.

June 9. I took him a letter from Mr. Bourne, and read the following sentence: 'I think I perceive you are in the gospel net' (he here shed tears, and said, 'I fear not, sir'), 'and though flesh and blood would rend you away, yet, as the Saviour commanded to cast the net on the right side so as to enclose you, the early intimations of his grace, though dimly seen, are seen, which bring forth the cry described in your letter. Fear will urge you to cry often to Jesus Christ' (here he said, 'Yes'), 'and he will often seem to pay no heed, and, as if inattentive to you, to be writing on the ground; but this is intended to try the nature of the

work in your heart. The woman of Canaan was strongly rebuffed, but cried the more, and at last Jesus said, "O woman, great is thy faith."' (He said, 'The thought of this has several times encouraged me.') 'Who knows but this may be your happy case? Do you feel a spiritual resolution to try?' (He said, with some emphasis, 'Yes I do, sir.') 'Then assuredly all your darkness and doubt and fear and perplexity will be swallowed up in the glory of the revelation of God's pardoning mercy to your soul.'

During my enforcement of this sentence he said several things which struck me. He said, though very weak, he was able to cry; but his cry gave him no satisfaction, for it seemed to him to be only for fear of hell. I told him I knew he could not make himself believe, hate sin, or love God; but that the feeling conviction that he could do nothing right must simply urge him to look to Christ. And I said, 'If this be true prayer in you it is by the power of the Spirit, not by your own strength.' 'Oh, but it is no use pretending, sir, I feel to lie mostly dead.' 'This shows your utter need of looking to Christ for all. Mr. Boalter, if you are saved it will be by the great power and according to the eternal purpose and foreknowledge of God. His mercy will not come by chance to you. This cry in your heart may well encourage you.' 'Oh, sir,' he said, 'what a mercy! how thankful those should be who receive it,—"kings and priests," what would they have more? I am now quite exhausted, but I can employ my mind a little, while I rest my head quietly.'

June 10. 'I feel great difficulty,' he said, 'in prayer.' I told him I expected he would find all kinds of hindrances, but he must attend to none of them, and look more simply to Jesus through them all. A paroxysm of cough coming on I left him, and prayed alone; then returned, and read the 61st Psalm to him, commenting upon it. 'If you feel difficulty you have communion with David, for his heart was overwhelmed; but the use he made of it was to cry, "Lead me to the rock (Christ) that is higher than I." And though you have not David's clear faith to add, "Thou hast been a shelter for me," yet it is for this faith you must ask. And remember the king who is preserved alive through all generations is Christ and his mystical body; therefore you have hope in him, though out of him none.'

June 13. He said, 'It is the CLEAR knowledge that God will have mercy on my poor soul that I want.' He told me also that he felt more encouragement than he had done to believe in the forgiveness of his sins, but that he had found nothing clear. I spoke to him about Peter walking on the sea, his faith failing, his sinking, crying, and deliverance. He anticipated my words, smiling as he spoke. Afterwards he said he found he must WAIT. 'Yes,' I said, 'in earnest desire and prayer you must wait.' I then read to him some verses out of Hart's hymns,

> 'To trust to Christ alone,
> By thousand dangers scar'd,
> And righteousness have none,
> Is something very hard,' &c.;

and he said, 'It is hard, for my sins fresh and fresh keep rising.'

June 15. He said he had been in much darkness, but everything induced him to seek to lie low at the foot of the cross, begging and

crying for mercy. 'I used,' he said, 'to trust in my prayers, and now self-righteousness is not gone.' I told him it was the worst enemy he had; for I was sure if that were subdued, I should find him rejoicing in God's mercy. I read with him Psalm xl, dwelling particularly on David's feeling innumerable troubles, even after he had been brought out of the horrible pit, and that in consequence he could only say, 'Be pleased to deliver me;' and again, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me;' so he must be brought to resign himself entirely to the sovereign mercy of God, and come empty to the fulness in Jesus Christ, which is all exceedingly hard because of our pride and unbelief.

June 16. He said he had more encouragement in the night, not only to see he must lie very low at the foot of the cross for mercy, but as if he really did lie there, and watched to see if the Lord would hear and answer his cry, which he believed he would do. I took occasion to read the parable of the prodigal son to him. I said, 'Perhaps it describes a case very like your own. Perhaps you had long ago,—when you first felt those fears which were relieved by entering into a profession,—a seed of grace in your heart: you went out, however, and became vain, and squandered all your Father's substance; then came the famine; and you, instead of returning, went and joined the world, and would have eaten husks if you could, but were not suffered. Then mark, the prodigal comes to himself, is humbled, emptied, and returns to his father. This coming to himself, humiliation and confession, implies much, and is a great work of God's Spirit within us, as I hope you now feel. Further on it is said, "When he was yet a great way off," his father met him. That's what you are, a great way off; and here watch and pray the Lord to meet you. In the night you really thought you came and drew nigh to God, but there was one thing lacking, viz. what Jeremiah found, "Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not." Be sure you lose not sight of this, look and beg and cry and believe. I also felt encouragement for you in the night, for I was waked with an earnest cry to God for you, which lasted for some time.' 'Oh, sir,' he cried, 'I am glad to hear that.' I added, 'Now dwell upon that chapter in Luke; perhaps it is for you: the 1st verse of it says, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him,"—be ye one of them.'

June 18. The account he gave filled my heart with gratitude. 'When I waked in the early morning I began to look whether I could discern the Lord working in me. Presently the whole parable of the prodigal fell upon me, with such joy as I cannot tell you,—it is wonderful.' 'What was it that so comforted you?' 'Sir, it was that I could so sweetly come to God, and that the Lord, I do believe, met me.' Here, being much interrupted by coughing, he added, 'I thought I should have had a long tale to tell you, but I cannot tell you; and the things I felt seem to leave me.' I told him I expected he would find they did, but he need not be discouraged; that the way was not in himself; that I thought he had felt something of what scripture calls 'unspeakable,' and he would find it unspeakable indeed.

June 20. He said, 'I have been in much darkness these two days, and now feel greatly afraid.' I told him he must not give way to desponding fears, but remember the mercy of God, and pray earnestly that he would

return to him, and manifest his favour fully; that he himself might be brought to feel what Job felt when he said, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' My words seemed to kindle upon him, and he began to talk cheerfully, saying many things, which showed a discernment in him, that pleased me. Presently he reverted to the parable of the prodigal, 'The son said, I will arise and go to my father,—and he went; but then it follows, The father met him,—here's the point, the father met him!' 'Yes,' I said, 'here's the point, "when he was yet a great way off his father saw him."' 'Yes,' he added, 'and "ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him."' I felt thankful to God, for I had myself thought, when first opening the parable, that this passage was the nail to be fastened in his heart. (See Eccles. xii. 11.)

June 21. Still very ill; but, I thought, advancing in spiritual understanding. He said very earnestly, as if he would describe a feeling new and yet influential, 'I find I am but a seeker, nothing but a seeker, if the Lord will be pleased to have mercy upon me.' I replied, 'I am sure that till the Lord really brought me down to be a seeker, and nothing but a seeker, I never advanced one step. You remember how God has given you cause to hope in his mercy: the effect of which has been to make you still more only a seeker.' 'Oh, that it has!' 'Well then, you see the difference between the effect of God's grace and the workings of legal pride; the first always humbles and empties, the last puffs up and inflates.'

June 23. This morning my friend Mr. Abbott, from London, called and found him in deep distress, almost despair. He said, 'Oh, what an awful prospect is eternal destruction! How I have rolled sin as a sweet morsel under my tongue!' In the evening he said to me, 'I have had a strange conflict this afternoon. Satan has kept showing me the pit of hell, and I have shivered over it. I cried very hard for mercy, and at last I found a little help from God, and the enemy gave way; but after this the temptation returned, until just as you came up-stairs, I laid myself right down before Jesus Christ, to do as he would with me.' I repeated part of Jer. xxx, and reminded him that Jacob wrestled all night, and prevailed in the morning; but not by his own strength.

June 25. Yesterday he was much the same, and also to-day. 'I feel,' he said, 'full of prayer, nor can I cast away my hope that Jesus will not leave me to perish; but oh, the dreadful fear! But I have been thinking whether I would not rather be here, and as I am, than filled with the goods of the world; and I feel I would rather be as I am.'

July 6. I went with Mr. Bourne to see several of my people, lastly to Joseph Boalter. He spoke of having found a light in his heart. 'This made me,' he said, 'to watch, and look up to the Lord. Presently he did meet me, and changed my whole nature. Oh, it was as if he changed my whole nature! and I could praise and thank him for his very great mercy, and that my sins were forgiven.'

Mr. Bourne and myself were much struck with the simplicity, reality, feeling, and power of the things this poor man expressed. He told us, with tears of gratitude, his sense of the blessing God had granted him through human instruments. When reminded of the sentence read to him from the letter before quoted, he said, 'It was just so with me,—exactly so!'

July 14. He said that the exercises of his mind since I last saw him had been to bring him to a surprising view of the awful depths of deceit in his heart; but that in much extremity he had found a holdfast upon Christ; and that sometimes he could say, even in deep conviction, his hope had been more surely confirmed. While I continued pointing out the various changes he described as manifesting the same spirit as in David and Paul, he said, 'I cannot account for them; they are wonderful; even *now* he has restored me; I believe it is his presence I feel; blessed be his holy name for ever.' I was so much affected with this mercy of God that I continued silent for some time, worshipping God. Then I repeated those words in Job, 'Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak . . . . I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' He said, 'My heart was down, down, down, while that comfort lasted, and so it is now. This has been the sweetest half hour I have ever enjoyed.' I said, 'What did you feel?' He said, 'I felt I was safe.'

July 19. I have seen Boalter several times. On Monday I found him lost in astonishment and wonder. 'I am saved,' he said, 'and who has done it? I have done nothing; I could do nothing; but, oh, I know who to thank for it, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!" How they TALK about a merciful God, but this is past everything wonderful. Who has been such a wretch as I, and yet I am saved!'

He died on the 23rd. His last words were, 'I can see him, and I can touch him! Bless the Lord, O my soul. Heaven, heaven!' Thus he died, leaving to every spiritual observer a bright and clear testimony that he had passed from death unto life. That evening I preached from the words, 'Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold. Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off' (Job xxxvi. 24, 25).

CHAPTER VI.

1837–1843. Indications of the Lord's notice—Reflections upon four years—Six months of heaviness and trial, relieved by touches both in private and in the public ministry—More comfort, especially from Rev. ii. 1—Letter to Mr. Burrell—Invitation to preach at Hitchin—Against drawing hasty conclusions—Conversations of Mr. Maydwell and Mrs. R.—Death of Mrs. Gilpin—Support—Access in prayer—Discerns faith—The majesty, beauty, and grace of Christ—Visits to Mr. Burrell, Mr. Nunn, and Mrs. R.—Grave-stone erected—Eight years since his spiritual anointing—Reproach for the Lord's sake.

Aug. 10. *Bengeo.* In looking back to trace the hand and power of God, I have been much impressed with some indications of his notice. When we moved, last March, to our present house, I found a little strength from Hosea xii, 'He had power over the angel, and

prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him,' &c.; and I thank God I have never lost sight of it. At the same time these words impressed me, 'I that am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles:' and though conscious of wishing, when I changed my habitation, to feel more settled, yet, since then, the words have turned to me for a testimony that God noticed my condition, and that it was according to his will; which has greatly contributed to keep me settled in mind.

I must also mention that last Sunday night I was waked out of my sleep by a strong and an effectual cry in my heart, ascending. This has been the fifth time of this recurrence, for which I feel much thankfulness, as it appears to be an evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. On this occasion it was for myself, as once before, and began with these words, which had been made as a staff to me through the living power with which they had again and again renewed my soul, 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' The three remaining occasions it especially concerned others, and once in particular Joseph Boalter: and I am sure in the last instance I have reason to say it was signally answered.

1838. *March* 4. Yesterday many pressing cares conspired to fill my mind in prayer; but I had a very little yet sweet sense that one thing prevailed, viz. that the love of Jesus Christ and his honour might be manifested in his Ordinance to-day. I thank God I found it, at least in a like measure, so as to show me how truly excellent it is to seek him always first, that, the conscience being made clean by his blood, we may find his unctuous presence in the ministry of the word, at his table, in prayer, in the communion of saints, and in secret meditation.

April 7. Absence from home for several days together, for the first time for more than four years, led me to reflect upon all that had passed during that period. I believe that a real blessing from God attended this. I know not when I have felt more happy in the sure belief of his guidance, that what has passed has been his doing; he has overthrown and established also; and has broken a thousand snares in pieces before me, and at times secretly guided me though I knew not his intention. I thought of the very kind but really ensnaring offers made me by some of my friends, and yet I had escaped from them, and raised up a stone of help. My heart was filled with the spirit of praise, and I was encouraged to commit my way afresh to the Lord. Nevertheless I have had many painful changes since.

1839. *Jan.* 13. The Lord mercifully helped me. My subject was the prayer of Jabez, which I feel persuaded at times is the language of my heart, 'Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed,' not seemingly, but spiritually with the real blessing, 'and enlarge my coast,' for I am sorely straitened, 'and that thine hand might be with me,' for there are many against me, 'and that thou wouldest keep me from evil,' for I run into it. I urge and press on in great

weakness to find what follows, 'God granted him that which he requested' (1 Chron. iv. 10).

I was encouraged by the simple relation given me by two of my hearers, that the word came with power to them; but the Lord knows how clouds and darkness swallow me up, that I dare not be at rest: and many things press, especially this, that, in reference to several special points, the Lord makes as though he heareth not. 'O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.'

Jan. 25. Lord, I cannot teach others, except thou teach me; and by thy inward light and strength, I, the weakest and most unfit instrument, must stand a pillar. Let me not be the servant of men, but of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, as thy minister, possess that hidden Urim and Thummim (Deut. xxxiii. 8). Oh, how these cries are wrung out of my heart! Also I have felt some power, which I desire may be maintained by the mercy of God, respecting Samson's lock. That secret of the Lord I must hold inviolate. It is dreadful to go out 'as at other times,' but, behold, the Lord is departed from us (Judges xvi. 20).

Aug. 28. 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones' (Isa. lvii. 15). If so, away with all religion which does not consist with poverty in spirit; for what is the only power of religion, and its glory, but this,—the Lord's indwelling!

Mr. Abbott came from London. I spent most of the morning in prayer by myself, and then went to meet him. I felt sensible of strength from the hankering of my heart after JESUS.

Nov. 1. At times I have a transient gleam of the unchangeable purposes of the Lord. I tremble, yet I feel a hope the aspect is of mercy towards me. I thought also I was helped last Friday in the pulpit, while fearing I should be utterly overthrown, with these words, 'He holdeth the seven stars in his right hand' (Rev. ii. 1).

Nov. 22. For myself, I must say, I have been secretly quickened and made very fervent and watchful: but my heart greatly trembles. I have been gradually made to feel that the words above quoted, as I stood up in my weakness, were the words of Christ to me. There has been a change to more hope, though still often dashed, and always afraid. Yesterday morning, having some spiritual perception of faith, I said, 'What makes me afraid unless it be the clear conviction that I cannot of myself maintain my own soul?' and I took comfort from the stability of the covenant.

Dec. 18. All that I can say is that I tremble at the goodness of the Lord, which he pours out now in the conclusion of my first seven years. My little flock seems bowed as one man to seek the Lord. I cannot set down all the things which have surprised me among them. The Lord knows I often feel and confess I know nothing, nevertheless a high hand bears me up in hope; yet my sins call for judgment, and my spirit cries for mercy. I feel some-

thing of the power of that blessed and continual 'looking unto Jesus.'

Dec. 31. I was led on Saturday last to write a long letter to Mr. Burrell, containing an account of myself since the autumn of 1838, when he left Hertford*. I have not in this diary set down all the things I told him. The cloud which soon after that covered me, and the confirmation of it by the passage of these words through my mind, 'Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.' I could not remove the fear which then fell upon me, that the judgments there predicted against Egypt were about to fall on me. Many times I endeavoured to read the chapter through (Isa. xix) and could not, though I generally found a little help in the last verse, 'Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.' I really found in a measure these things, for I was afraid of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, and my heart became like a woman's, especially so before any whom I thought feared God. I was under this heaviness the whole first half of this year; and just before the visit of Mr. Abbott, in August, was the darkest period of my trouble. My enmity and prejudices had been distressing to me. The morning my friend came I had been led to read Isa. xviii and xix at family worship, and it pleased the Lord to enable me to fall down before the whole of these chapters, and after this I was sensibly relieved; yet only very lately have I been able to believe that that burden of the word of the Lord has really been removed from me. Little helps and encouragements flowed in till Oct. 25, when these words quietly passed through my mind, 'He holdeth the seven stars in his right hand;' and this I feel able to say, with a heart to praise him, that I believe it was his word to me because he has held me up so evidently since, in the pulpit and out of it, and in private interviews, and in letters which I have been called upon to write; and has graciously poured out his Spirit upon the flock.

Now, at the expiration of this year, I must say, 'Bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard; which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.' But how weak is my heart! I feel dashes of fear lest the Lord should leave me to myself, because of my sins (Psa. xix. 13), and then I know how awful my case would become. If he ordained

* Mr. Gilpin notices particularly the spiritual refreshing he found during the visit of Mr. Burrell, both from his preaching and private conversations; especially on one occasion, when they took a short walk together, and Mr. B. commented upon Rev. xx, remarking, 'Who are they that are written in the Lamb's book of life? Those who answer to the tokens described by the Lord, Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the mourners, the hungry, the pure, the merciful, the peacemakers, and the persecuted.'

prosperity it would turn to licentiousness. I dare not make one resolution, but have some opening in looking to the Lord Jesus; for he has taught me a little the value and power of his great name: and if he will but allow it, I will continue to hold fast what he has already given to me, looking and crying for more. Amen.

1840. [In the beginning of this year Mr. Gilpin was invited to preach at Hitchin, by the congregation of the Hill Chapel in that place, under circumstances of peculiar trial which had befallen them since the death of their stated minister. There were some amongst them with whom Mr. Gilpin felt unity, and an earnest desire to preach to them every week while destitute of a settled ministry. This for a short time he did, under a sweet sense of the Lord's approbation; and a lasting friendship sprung up between him and some of the members; but dissensions and other causes prevented the continuance of his public ministrations. The following letter, addressed to Mr. John Horn, will show the exercise of his mind upon this subject.]

June 26.

I SHOULD have been very glad to have heard further particulars respecting yourself and Mrs. H., and our dear friend S. Underwood. My heart is often with him, and I hope his prayers and yours will be unceasing and without fainting that the Lord would look upon you, both individually and as a body, in his saving mercy. For myself I must tell you I feel many clouds, which I am only able at intervals to rise above. I perceive that the true path is one of humiliation and affliction, and I am a most unworthy soldier. The Lord strengthen me to endure hardness, and enable me to find peace in Christ during this conflict. I often feel deeply discouraged, and, as far as I look at myself, justly so; but sometimes my heart draws near to Christ, and then I feel a reviving. It was thus with me last evening as I was walking home, greatly oppressed because of my own unfitness, and my trials with several of my people; but though faith and hope revived, there was a great awe upon my spirit, for I thought the Lord, though as a Father, was angry with me: and 'no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' At such a time, however, I can hope that the Lord will not suffer my words, as a minister, altogether to fall to the ground. He has a people, and he will feed them by the ministry of the word; but these things are not established except through fire and through water. I feel here constrained to add that I do believe if it be his will that I should preach among you, he will open the way in another manner than appears at present.

Yours, &c., B. G.

July 28. Yesterday I was prostrate before temptation. My religion was made to appear all delusion, and everything that I had heard and followed which brought me to be as I am, folly. This morning I felt in prayer a gentle whisper of hope, as if it were

suggested to me, 'What were those dark fears and gloomy conclusions which oppressed you? Were they from the Lord? Were you not at that time without sensible light from the Lord? Beware how, in such a state as that, you draw conclusions against yourself, lean to your own wisdom, or follow other people, instead of waiting upon the Lord.' This was confirmed to me afterwards in family prayer from these words, 'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.'

Sept. 1. Alas, I have to record my sad condition; all my resolutions are swallowed up, my prayers fervent at times, but fitful. I am greatly disquieted. I desire to write this that I may not make a fair show; but I seek power and grace to look to the Lord Jesus, not to myself. But, oh, what worms we are when the Lord withdraws from us! Some power I did feel in Isa. lvii; and in these words of David, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.' It is a cry against the fixed power of that wicked, wretched corruption which keeps me from the Lord for fear of his holy scrutiny. Lord thou knowest, if writing solemn prayers and signing a thousand covenants were the thing, I would lose no time in doing so; but they are all wind and vanity. Lord, there is mercy with thee.

1841. *Feb.* 26. 'O when wilt thou come unto me?' I conversed with my dear friend Mr. W. Maydwell, and found him very low, a great awe upon his spirit, and a keen perception of the wrath of God; with sensible darkness and rebellion, which he deplored with great tenderness. I could only tell him I believed he would one day rejoice for this affliction. He said the Lord had given him a little hope on Monday night, while he was seeking for a testimony that the Lord had a regard for the children of men; and these words entered, 'Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.' The next morning they returned with great power and sweetness, and with such an unutterable feeling of the value and love of Christ as quite melted him, and he saw that his hope, his faith, his love, yea all his religion was Christ, and Christ alone. About the same time he thought of the case of Abraham, and found great delight in the words, 'He rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.'—He saw ME, and was glad. Being filled with love to Christ, he said, 'True, Lord, it was enough to make him glad.' And he said to me, 'How truly divine the change is, from feeling the whole heart filled with enmity to feel it thus filled with love! This is truly the work of God!'

March 1. Yesterday I found some help, and preached from Lam. iii. 26, 'It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.' Several found help and encouragement. One of my hearers, Mrs. R., found it a good day, and this evening expressed a wish to see me. She said:—

'This morning the word fell upon me, "Thy prayers and thine alms

are come up for a memorial before God." I said, "Lord this is too much for me, may I take it?" and the word said, "Hold fast the confidence of your faith, and look to Christ." Oh, I did not know what to do, but I trembled at the Lord's goodness to such a sinner! I never prayed as I did yesterday in the chapel. The Lord says his house shall be called a house of prayer for all people; and so I found it. My heart was bowed down with godly sorrow, and I wept tears of contrition, for I almost saw the Lord Jesus with me by the eye of faith; and when faith sees him the flesh does fall down,—indeed, Mr. Gilpin, the flesh does fall down. Oh how I did pray to Jesus! and then those words this morning seemed to tell me that my prayers were heard. Only think that he should say such a sinner's prayers are come up for a memorial!'

[In the autumn of this year Mr. Gilpin sustained a severe affliction in the loss of his wife. A few weeks after his bereavement he made the following entry in his diary.]

Oct. 27. I desire to write down a few of the many things which have occurred since this visitation. First, I have reason to bless the Lord for giving me more quietness, resignation, and hope than I dared to expect. Secondly, I thank him for some peculiar touches, openings of his blessed way of salvation, that have appeared more valuable to me than my dear lost treasure; showing me that the old man must be crucified with Christ: also a little of this blessing (which came in answer to prayer for my dear wife), 'I will be a God to her,' making me to feel the power and glory of these words, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh; and he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' Also, the Lord has clearly shown that he loved her with an everlasting love; and I said, 'Lord, thou art the husband of her spirit, let me not contend if it please thee to take her to thyself.' Moreover, he gave us both to feel that he loved the child, and she said, 'Let my little son sleep with me, for I believe he will wake with me:' and so they sleep together. I have a hope also that the promise the Lord remarkably sealed upon her heart one month ago, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,' he will be pleased to confirm to *me*: she even thought at the time it was so intended.

I was much supported on the day of the funeral. My brother-in-law, Charles Jeffreys, was a comfort to me. I have, moreover, had some encouragement amongst my people. It came sweetly from 1 Thess. iii, very soon after my trouble, 'Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.' There are living ones amongst them; and surely the good Shepherd will not forsake me, for he has commanded me to feed them. Lord, I cannot keep myself, do thou keep me.

My casting down has been on the whole greatest on account of my two little children. Lord, give me a spiritual father's heart, and the blessing thou didst promise me. I have some help in wrestling.

I have had many blessed seasons in which the word has been

precious. On Sunday (Oct. 24) a passage, which has rather looked at me for several years, unfolded itself in my soul. How sweet, how quickening I have found it, even until now! 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned' (Song viii. 6, 7). The Lord has graciously made the first clause my cry; and I am urged to it by all the four reasons assigned in the following clauses.

Lord, as I said to thee (on the morning of Sept. 29, when my trouble was beginning), there is such a perception of life that I cannot believe it is for death: neither in me, nor in my wife, nor in my child. Lord, thou hast indeed thy way in the whirlwind and in the storm, but I hope thou hast confirmed, and wilt confirm this.

1842. *Jan.* 14. This morning I walked, as my frequent custom is, to see Mrs. Judd. I found her very low in mind and body, and in trouble on account of her son's illness, but tender, loving, and spiritual. I was enabled with some freedom to keep lifting up my heart in prayer. I interceded much for others, and twice came very near the Lord; once in going, and once in returning. I remember my trembling prayer in the beginning of 1841: 'O when wilt thou come unto me?' I am enabled to say he has in his mercy come nearer, and given me a further insight into his truth, that it is not in vain to seek his face.

July 20. My great ignorance alarms and disquiets me, yet I continually take up with ease in a false resting-place. On Sunday I preached from these words, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults,' and found a hope which stayed me. The next day I was so full of unbelief and iniquity that all the work and my hopes were clouded, and my spirit listless and flat. I read, at night, part of Owen's sermon on these words, 'Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them;' and was surprised to find that it did me good and strengthened me, yet led to much searching. This morning I walked early to Hertford. On my way I found a certain low power to plead and cry only in Christ's name, and to put *myself* out of the question. Its effect was peaceful. Surely it is faith. Lord, what shall I render unto thee for this sovereign mercy, that thou shouldest grant me faith! I returned in time for Mr. Bourne's reading [then on a visit]; he expounded from the words, 'There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.' He brought in Isa. xxv. 4, 'Thou hast been a strength to the poor,' and therefore it is said in verse 1, 'I will praise thy name.' And he told us how in spiritual weakness and humiliation we must yet be bent on cleaving to the

hope, and praising the Lord for his help; adding, 'The more of this sort of courage we find, the more the Lord owns it.'

July 23. I trust the Lord enabled me yesterday to preach in much simplicity, and according to his direction. The point which had arrested me in reading Psalm xlv was the ascriptions of majesty and sovereign dominion to Jesus Christ there. I perceived how this must lay hold of our spirit, and bring us very low before him, if his redemption be effectually applied to our hearts. The Spirit, as I believe, helped me to contrast this with the pride and arrogance of false teachers (2 Pet. ii. 1): 'There shall be false teachers among you (even of your own selves, or fully acknowledging themselves Christians), who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them,'—that means they shall boast of redemption, (if they did not, these errors would not come in *privily*,) but they shall virtually deny the Lord's supreme dominion. Many open heretics deny his divinity; these private ones without doing so in word still in spirit deny his sovereignty. The word in the original is peculiar, 'even denying *τὸν δεσπότην*.'

July 26. The darkness and opposition of some, the deadness and stupidity of others, are very trying. I trembled yesterday evening in the fear of being left with a corrupt heart to fall, in consequence of these things, into pride, repining, and worldly conformity, or unfaithfulness. This morning I read a letter from Mr. Bourne, and I thought I never saw more clearly the meekening influence of true grace in trials. It brought me, with some power and attraction of heart, to consider these words, 'Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!' There is no fear of idolatry in seeking to admire Jesus Christ.

Aug. 4. Yesterday I was sorely bound by temptation, so as to be greatly hindered from prayer, but it was through mercy loosed, and I afterwards prayed in weakness, yet sensibly feeling for and expecting grace through Christ. Now also I feel the Lord encourages me to hope that Christ is mine, and I endeavour to lay to heart Malachi's words, as I have often done in times past, 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.' Lord, I 'vow and sacrifice' Christ—no corruption in him. In my bound condition yesterday I wrote to warn one whom I perceived to be in a slippery place, and I hope the Lord helped me. It is true my own state is bad, my prospects low, my condition mean; but I must say, with thanks to the Lord, he makes use of these mean things for the good of his own people. It was this that helped me to talk to one this morning, and encourage her to seek the Lord and faint not:—'Though some of your wise friends seem to be doing more by their own contrivances in five minutes than you and I with our prayers in five months, yet do these trials in us prove the exercise of spiritual life, a treasure infinitely

greater than any other.' She was comforted, and rejoined, quoting the words that had been given her, 'Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.'

1843. *Jan.* 14. Being in London, I called on Mr. Burrell. On my entering I said, 'I hope I shall not disturb you;' he replied, 'No, I hope not;' and he immediately entered with the greatest simplicity and power on spiritual subjects. I was quite astonished at the compass of his words, and very thankful I had been there. Thankful also for his expression of unity with me, and can truly say I felt abased before the goodness of the Lord. After I had been in the city I returned to Mr. Nunn's, and sat with him till chapel time, and then we went there together. Mr. Nunn seemed truly glad to see me. I felt much meekened in spirit, having also some sense of the love of God towards me, from a spiritual meditation upon these words, 'Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' He gave me a long and very edifying account of poor R.'s case. I did not wonder at the depth of his despair, but was truly glad to find Mr. Nunn so well satisfied that he had found mercy at last. When I told Mr. Nunn that I had myself many times felt sensibly the want of spiritual love and unity in R.'s spirit, and that perhaps the things which had occurred might prove profitable to his sister, and show that her want of unity with her brother was more justifiable than it had been judged to be, I was quite struck by the simple candour with which Mr. Nunn replied, 'Just so, Mr. Gilpin, he used to say he could not find unity with his sister; her spirit seemed so contrary to his, that he could not have family prayers while she stayed with him. But if our religion is not able to pray down all these obstacles to family worship, what is it worth? For myself, I must tell you what, if you have seen some of my letters to my fellow-deacon, our mutual friend Mr. Bourne, is no secret to you, that I have been a little, and indeed more than a little, out with him. Now, if I give way to this sad prejudice instead of stopping both my ears and praying for Mr. Bourne night and day, that the Lord may bless him and those with whom he is, oh, Mr. Gilpin, where should I be in a very little while?' My heart united exceedingly with Mr. Nunn while he thus spoke. I thought of the words, 'When the children of Israel were strong they put the Canaanites to tribute.' I thought I never had a clearer example before me of the meaning of this, 'It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' I did not wonder that, notwithstanding his trial by these temptations, the Lord blessed him so that his soul was as a watered garden.

On my return I called on Mrs. R. at her particular desire. She told me what she had found on the Wednesday morning previous. Her description was so exceedingly powerful of the appearance of the glory of Christ, that I altogether received her words, and doubted them not. The majesty of his beauty was such that her whole frame sank under it. 'My comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.' Surely this is to strengthen

her against future trials. She said she heard the words afterwards, 'Take up thy cross, and follow me.'

Feb. 22. Yesterday the stone over the remains of my late dear wife was fixed. I went to see it in the evening and felt comforted. It is nearly a year and a half since our separation, but I have not been able till now to erect this memorial, though I have designed it from the first. I wondered why the cloud rested on this little point, that I could not see the Lord's approbation in it, and it used to grieve me to go through St. Andrew's churchyard. During many months I prayed at intervals that I might not set up a stone graven by art and man's device without the Lord's sanction, but I never could discover that I was heard. At last, about a month ago, I took up sorrowfully the paper on which I had written the intended inscription, and as I was reading one line of it, a very sweet, free feeling of praise passed through me to God for his mercy to her. I said, 'Blessed be God, who gave her the victory.' Then I sat down and wrote out the inscription with this alteration, and from that moment the cloud was cleared up, and it turned to me for a testimony, and I acknowledged it as a mark of the Lord's goodness to me. The inscription is as follows:—

In memory of

HENRIETTA,

The beloved wife of the Rev. Bernard Gilpin,

Some time Rector of this Parish.

(Also of their youngest and infant son.)

Blessed be God who has given her the victory through Jesus Christ, so that, knowing, she should not come into condemnation but was passed from death unto life (John v. 24), she died in the full assurance of hope, Oct. 12, 1841. Aged 34 years.

What is sown in death's dishonour,
Shall revive to glory's light;
What is sown in this weak manner,
Shall be raised in matchless might.

In memory also of two sons of the above.

Bernard Gilpin,

Who died March 28, 1834. Aged 5 months.

And William Gilpin,

Who died Dec. 12, 1835. Aged 15 months.

I stand astonished when I reflect on the mercy of the Lord in having preserved me hitherto from the sorrow of the world which worketh death, in reference to this afflictive bereavement. I am sure never man and wife loved each other better than we did, or felt a sweeter harmony of mind and will. I used to think the separation would blight everything, but it has blighted nothing. Lord, whence is this to me?

Aug. 17. It is eight years to-day since the Lord sent these words, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters,' &c. Tried though I am, I feel more the power than I have done in some of the intermediate years. Is it not a wonder that he has stood by me, and borne with my great ignorance? This I keenly feel. In the night, between sleeping and waking, my heart sweetly ascended for a long time. I felt great resignation, and committed my different trials to the Lord, if so he would make all work together for good. It refreshed me, and I felt no rebuke on account of the step I had taken regarding ——. This is a mercy.

Conclusion of the year *. I know that the things I am engaged in will be found in the end to be God's work, and not man's; nevertheless, under the painful trial which I and some others are at present called to bear, I was, on Dec. 22, filled with gloom and fear, sensible, I am sorry to say, of murmuring in spirit, in which state, just as I was passing Mr. Spence's door, the words of Christ came gently, 'Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.' The next day the Lord seemed to seal up all the word except that passage, so that I was obliged to preach from it, and found great liberty in so doing. I was truly glad to hear Mr. Spence describe the tried state of his feelings, and how applicable he had found that discourse to be. It knit my heart to him. This is a great mercy, as well as many more, for which I desire to say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.'

CHAPTER VII.

1844. Visit to Mrs. Grimes—The excellent oil—Stability of the Lord's hand—First spiritual word—Visits to his people—Mrs. Boswell—The Lord near—Church-meeting—Unfolding of the word—Conversations with Mrs. Boalter, Mrs. Pallett, and Miss B-n—Ebenezer—C. A. Bauley—Conflict and prevalency in a ministerial trial.

Feb. 5. I went to take leave of MRS. GRIMES [one of his people, apparently near her end]. I had not this day, as for the last four months, administered the Ordinance to her, she being too weak, but had sent this word for her consideration, 'I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come' (Luke xxii. 18). She was in a most tender and happy frame, and able to give me the following account of the glory of the Lord in open vision, which he had been pleased to give her to strengthen her faith, and to prepare her for her approaching end. She so simply narrated this with such an unction of humiliation and holy

* In this year Mr. Gilpin was much interested in the case of Isaac Clark, a young man who died at Bengeo, whose narrative he afterwards published.

reverence, that I had no doubt it was indeed the clear revelation of Christ's love. I will relate it in her own words to me:—

'I was lying awake near three o'clock in the morning, and it was as if a voice said, "Look up, and see the eye of the Lord." I did so, and there seemed to be an eye looking down upon me in the midst of the open heaven. Oh, what an eye of tender compassion and love! It melted my heart to look at it. Very gradually the heaven unfolded on each side, and disclosed by little and little the whole face of the Saviour. I knew it was his face, but the beauty of it I cannot describe: I shall know it again when I get home. I remembered the words of a hymn I once had:

"'Tis heaven to look on Jesus' face."

I said, "Oh, it is heaven only to look at the glory of that lovely face!" Very slowly the heaven, which had opened, began to close again, and the countenance gradually was covered with great grandeur, as the moon withdrawing itself in a clear sky, and at last nothing was left except the eye alone. Oh, the compassion of that eye! It filled me with such a sense of the power of Christ's love, of his perfect reconciliation, that it made me long to be gone. I have longed to be gone ever since. Oh, I have longed to behold that eye and that countenance again!'

[This blessed expectation was realized about two months afterwards, when she testified, 'There is no sting in death: Jesus has taken its sting away. It has no sting but sin, and now the sin is gone.' Just one month and two days after this event her husband also fell asleep in Jesus, saying, 'He gave me the earnest many years ago; now he is about to give me the inheritance.']

Feb. 25. I found much enlargement in preaching from Psalm cxli. 4, 5, especially dwelling upon the 'excellent oil' which does not break our head. After service I called to see one who had been too ill to be present, and found, as on former occasions, that during illness morbid impressions and groundless prejudices prevail. I endeavoured most seriously to warn against self-pity, and said, 'It is only fruitless to keep complaining that God's children wound us: we should say, We are not worth caring about. Our grief must be that we wound them, and especially that we wound the Lord, and grieve his Spirit.'

March 16. I waked with these words, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city' (Rev. xxii. 14). I felt a spring in them, and thought it was an intimation I should preach on them to-morrow. I have endeavoured to improve this by prayer and meditation through the day. I called on several of my people: Mrs. L. I found, as heretofore, vague and indistinct; no spiritual discernment of the essential truth, and when pressed bringing up two or three dreams or pleasing feelings, without instruction following them, as tokens for good. I had sweet conversation with Mrs. R. and some others, finding them low and tender in spirit. As I entered Mrs. Tims' room I had a remarkable feeling of the stability of the

Lord's hand on me for the last eleven years, and felt much thankfulness. I could, as it were, say, 'Thou hast established the work of my hands.' This brought me low, and I feel cause for much watchfulness that it may please the Lord not to give me over to a light spirit. 'Happy is the man that feareth alway' (Prov. xxviii. 14).

March 22. I was lately led to meditate on Jer. ix. 23, 24, which I always regard as the first spiritual word spoken to me, when I knew not the voice. I was enabled to enter into it with hope, fear, and desire; especially considering 'lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness.' To-day I have been exceedingly struck with Luther's sermon on the pedigree of Christ. He brings in the forty-two resting-places between Egypt and Canaan, mentioned in Num. xxxiii, and says, 'The Lord grant us grace to pass courageously through these forty-two degrees to Christ.' I found that chapter of hard names quite to shine. After this I went to several. One I visited gave me a very instructive account of overcoming temptation not to seek the Lord. In another there was a measure of earnestness and simplicity which rather encouraged me; but the chief thing I felt to be lacking was *instruction* in all the light described. I could not discover that it had the least sanctifying influence. I spoke very tenderly and cautiously, but told her if the light was from the Lord, she would, in answer to further prayer, understand the necessity of these fruits and effects. I then went to see Mrs. Boalter in her new lodging, and found her in a tender, thankful frame, and her heart enlarged over her spiritual enemies which had held her so long. In the evening I preached from the words, 'Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness' (Isa. xxxii. 16), and read Deut. viii. I spoke afterwards to one who was very low, all her spirit sunk, and her heart failing her. This helped to bring me low myself: my heart sunk as I walked home. The trials of many in the church harass me. This shows my weakness. I will endeavour, by the Lord's help, not to excuse it, for the government is not on my shoulder.

April 10. I went to see a poor woman, MRS. BOSWELL. She gave me, in a very tender and simple spirit, the following account, which deeply entered my heart:—

'Last week I think I was more tried than in all my life before. Wednesday I was oppressed beyond measure, and the outward trial I felt insupportable was the case of my poor reckless son. I endeavoured to wrestle for him all day, but found no light nor help at all. Towards night I said, "Lord, except I find a blessing I cannot close my eyes;" and little sleep I got, but no comfort. Towards morning I fell asleep, and to my horror found, as I awoke, my mouth was full of curses. I knew not how it was, but I could not restrain them. I got up and said, "Lord, what is come upon me?" and I was obliged to wrestle again. I remembered Mr. Bourne's words when I told him I was praying for my poor boy. "Mrs. Boswell," he said, "if you are right you will have to pray for yourself:" and I found this was hard labour indeed. Well, in the course of the day, there came words to me, but they were too good for me; I could not

believe they were mine, and put them away: "Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant." I did not feel much power, and could not take it that the Lord spake so to me. I continued very unhappy till Good Friday morning, when, being too ill to go to chapel, I dismissed my children, and feeling myself cast down and dull in heart, began to sweep my house. I had not swept long before a deep and wonderful view of Christ's sufferings came over me, which greatly melted down my heart. I never felt it in that degree in all my life. The words came twice, "It is finished! It is finished!" "Not, Lord, finished for me," I said, "surely not for such a heavy sinner as I!" But the power became so great that I laid by my broom, went up-stairs, lay down, and began to meditate. The power increased, and I began to feel persuaded it was indeed for me, and the words came back twice, "It is finished! It is finished!" Oh, I never understood it before! My heavy sins were all gone. I believed Christ had suffered for me. I was persuaded this was his mercy to me.' I said to her, 'Now, Mrs. Boswell, I believe the same; but remember what the prophet said in effect to one of the kings of Israel, who had just got a great victory: "Take heed, for at the turn of the year the enemy will come back" (1 Kings xx. 22). You will find this, wherefore remember Ephes. vi.' I therefore read with her about the armour of God, which she entered into with much feeling.

April 20. I visited several of my people. Felt cast down in myself. After tea I walked all round Woodhall and Watton, through Stapleford, to Goldens. At first I was only low, and endeavoured to confess my bad state. When I got into the Park I felt more power. Between Watton and Stapleford the power was great. Then only, without a cloud, I prayed intensely for one in particular, that he and I might find that sweet refreshing of repentance unto life. Surely the Lord was near! Many points and persons came into review. As I passed a certain spot I thought of one of my flock, and her present trouble. 'Here,' said I, 'thou didst command life in her soul. O forsake her not!' At the same time this word secretly entered, 'For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore;' so that it seemed like a subject for to-morrow's preaching. Nearer home I felt much awe and tenderness.

May 26. It is eighteen years to-day since I was ordained deacon, in old St. Mary-le-bone Church, by Bishop Pelham of Lincoln. At present I am enabled to praise and thank the Lord that he did not suffer me to continue in blindness, but awakened me to 'see the kingdom of God' upon earth, and committed a dispensation of the gospel to me.

May 29. After dinner I walked and prayed respecting a church-meeting to be held this evening, concerning one in whom spiritual envy has wrought sad confusion and evil work. I thought of the councils and synods of Rome and other churches, and how they had vainly vaunted of the Holy Spirit's presence: and I thought is it possible he will really deign to look upon us? At eight o'clock I

met the members, and read part of Gal. v and vi. Then I prayed: after which we quietly deliberated on the whole case, and unanimously agreed that —— should be excluded from the Communion for seven months, and then readmitted on evidencing true repentance. All seemed greatly subdued under the influence of godly fear. We then concluded by prayer, in which I found a sweet peace.

June 2, *Sunday*. I was surprised but thankful to find the unfolding of that text, 2 Cor. vi. 2, about the 'acceptable time,' in my heart, so that I preached from it in the morning, and found much encouragement in the administration of the Ordinance. I think I never felt more clearly the distinction between the genuine spiritual power of that passage and all its context, especially this part, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' and the false Arminian gloss so lamentably prevalent. Oh, how clear, how mighty, how divine the application of the truth seemed to me! In the afternoon I read a few sentences in Bishop Cowper, one of which greatly cut me down, showing me my ignorance, and my heart trembled. I found a measure of power in part of James i, and perceived its great suitability to the trials we have just been passing through: therefore I preached from it in the evening, choosing this short word for my text, 'Do not err, my beloved brethren.'

June 4. Went down to Hertford. Passing Mrs. Boalter's door she came out to say that Miss B—n had sent to acquaint her that she wished to see me. On hearing this, I went back and found Miss B—n with Mrs. Pallett, and had a long conversation with her. She was exceedingly low, but had received several spiritual lifts; one which she most tenderly described from these words, 'Cast down, but not destroyed.' I felt to believe with all my heart that she was indeed the Lord's own adopted child; and was enabled, casting off all fear of man and of being misrepresented, to caution her seriously to obtain out of Christ's fulness, grace to break the silken cords of natural affection and easy compliance which hold her in bondage by keeping her externally united to the dead. I told her if she prevailed to break this I did not expect she would be less tried, but she would be more confirmed, and not always be in the evident bondage of spirit she now is. Lord, thine is the victory. Oh, grant her the victory!

[Further conversations between the three friends above named and Mr. Gilpin, which had previously taken place, may be here inserted. Mrs. Pallett had been led to seek from the Lord his guidance in respect to the outward ministry of the word; and finding her way open to hear at Port Vale Chapel, she increasingly felt the preaching attended with profit, and in reference to it said to Mr. Gilpin:—]

'Your words began to try me much at times. I found much searching, but never the great things some talk about, which has often cast me down; yet at other times I have found great encouragement. One Sabbath was very wet, and, thought I, Port Vale Chapel is too far off for me through the rain; I will go to the other. Then the words came, "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage:" so I went to Port Vale,

and have been nowhere else since. I began to think I should like to be joined to these people, and to know them better; for I knew none but Mrs. Boalter and Mrs. Tims. Once I heard you preach upon the Eunuch and Philip, and how it was said to him, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." You said, "There are many different chariots, and we must take heed to join the right one." It was very profitable to me; and some days afterwards, while praying that the Lord would open the way for me, the word fell upon my spirit, "Go near, and join thyself to THIS chariot," in such a manner that it seemed to clear my way, and I have wished to see you ever since.'

[Mr. Gilpin continues], I had the above conversation with Mrs. Pallett on the Saturday. On the Wednesday following I called on Mrs. Boalter, who was ill; and found her two friends sitting with her. So I said to Mrs. P., 'Your account last Saturday encouraged me greatly. It made me think of my sermon the evening before, which you will remember was on the Song of Solomon ii. 14, Christ's dove in the rock, and in "the secret places of the stairs." I thought your account proved that you had been walking through some of those "secret places," and that from step to step.'

Mrs. P., 'Indeed, sir, it surprises me to hear that you were encouraged by my account, for I was very much discouraged, and could hardly sleep all night afterwards. The next day I heard the word morning and evening very profitably, with many tears. It was very searching; and I acknowledge, with all my heart, my need of searching. I took great notice on Friday evening about "the steps," and thought if I am on those steps at all it can only be on the first of them. Sunday night, too, my sorrow continued; but on Monday morning, as I lay sorrowing and praying, the word struck me, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." I said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs." And it came again, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." I cannot tell you how I was comforted. I got up, took leave of Mrs. Tims, and went to see Miss B—n, whom I found very low in her mind and full of fears; and she would not let me go home, so I have been with her till now.'

Then MISS B—N spoke, 'Oh, sir, I am low indeed, and my faith is very small and weak! I wish I had more faith; but indeed I must say this encourages me, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." I have been greatly bruised: I am a bruised reed. My friend said just now that she feared she was at the farthest on the first of those "steps or stairs" which you preached about; but my fear is that I have not got even there.'

Then MRS. BOALTER rejoined, 'Miss B., you and I in our time have heard a great deal, and thought we knew a great deal; but you see what it is all come to. We know nothing, and it seems as if it were only just beginning with us. But the Lord has been very merciful to open my eyes in my old age; and before I die I hope to see both you and Mrs. Pallett joined in communion with us.'

I said to them, 'We must all four remember the words of good Mr. Romaine, which your conversation puts me in mind of. He says in one of his letters to this effect, "I know but little, yet am learning to get on in the school of Christ, and I hope soon to be on the lowest form, for there we learn most and fastest."'

June 8. I may call this the anniversary of my leaving the Established Church, as a circumstance has this day recurred, which, at the beginning of June 1835, brought my trial to a crisis. I felt greatly comforted, and thanked the Lord earnestly, when I considered all that had happened. It made Samuel's Ebenezer so sweet to me, that I believe I must preach from it to-morrow.

[About a twelvemonth before this date there settled at Ware Park Mills, a man, who found employment there as stone-dresser—C. A. BAULEY. For several years he had been the subject of some deep spiritual convictions, especially of heart sins, which he never could smooth over by any outward works of religion. In various places where he had lived he had sought to hear a free gospel preached, but meeting with disappointment, he often spent his Sundays in solitude, reading and praying under hedges; yet by no means always faithful to his convictions, and frequently sinking into a reckless despondency he would seek to drown them in worldly company, and that sometimes in the public house; but this always proved worse than his distressing fears. Soon after entering upon his new situation he was induced to attend Port Vale Chapel.]

Almost the first time he heard me [Mr. Gilpin writes] I was preaching (and I hope I may add, by the merciful will of God) upon the last verse of Jonah ii, 'And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.' My object was simply to show how a man, even though a good man like Jonah, yet, being a sinner still, may for his disobedience be almost swallowed up to his own destruction, yet the Lord in due time will speak the word of power, and deliver him fully. The whole discourse entered into the long perplexing trials of my new hearer, and caused him, for the first time, to conceive a hope from the dark feelings which beforehand only worked desponding fears in his soul. He could never forget this change, but used to describe it thus,—'I saw then, for the first time, the picture of a man lost and saved both. It was a point I never could fully understand before; but what I now feel is that the man who is [sensibly] lost, is the man who is saved.'

[From that time a spiritual union was felt between him and Mr. Gilpin, which continued unbroken till his death in June 1858.]

June 11. I went to see Bauley. He gave me such an account of his first clear bringing out yesterday morning as melted me in the dust. I was enabled to mingle with him heart and spirit, and wondered at the Lord's mercy in this. I remember the effect of his words was such, that while we were conversing wherever I opened the scriptures they dropped sweet myrrh. As nearly as I can recollect, his account was as follows. He said the inward trouble of his mind had been increasing for some time, that though occasionally revived with hopes he had always sunk afterwards the deeper in fears, and that, during these sinkings, he felt himself the most wicked of all men. His religion appeared gone at such times, and yet (he added), 'My heart was ruled by it night and day.' On the previous Sunday, the morning's discourse upon the words 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' had made him look back on all the way the Lord his God had led him. He knew then that when he used to wander in the lanes with his Bible, saying, 'O Lord, there must be an elect people,' it was the Lord who was guiding him. The Lord had kept

breaking his plans, and disappointing his ambitious schemes; but he could not, as yet, enjoy the clear love. Though the evening subject, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,' had impressed him, yet he went home in a very fearful state of conflict and temptation. I will now use his own words.

'After two hours' rest I had to go and work in the mill, at one o'clock on Monday morning, and I found in my heart a gradual coming in of hope in Christ; but I still longed after the pure love, and could not find it. Now I recollected the words of the evening text, and I said, "Surely I am now where Jacob was then." At last the hope in Christ became so strong that I was obliged to screen myself from his glory, and could only pray by crying, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" Oh, no money could have kept me from crying, "Jesus! Jesus!" I went home with my heart full. I had breakfast with my wife, and told her what I was feeling. We prayed, and I went back to my work on the mill-stones. But now the clear love came. All my sin was gone: whereas I had felt myself the very wickedest, now I could see no sin at all; I only saw Jesus! Jesus was that love! I never felt the like. I said, "This is what I have heard is to come." Then I heard these words, "Gird thy loins up, Christian soldier." But, oh, the showers of blessings! the showers of promises! they have filled me ever since. I had felt myself the very worst sinner, but now nothing but love, and no sin, for that lovely Christ is still with me. How have I been saying, "What shall I render unto the Lord?" How shall I describe what I see of the clearness of the love of Christ!'*

Sept. 22, *Sunday.* I was greatly tried in the morning lest I should be suffered to treat the case of J. S. and others in my own spirit; and being broken off from all subjects which seemed at all applicable to them, I found these words the most suitable, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' This was strengthening to my spirit. After service I joined J. S. and told him . . . . , but that I was certain the Lord had hitherto hidden from him the meaning of my letter, and the snare in his heart which had been the occasion of it. I found my authority spiritually confirmed in thus speaking, as it says, 'Be not dismayed before their faces, lest I confound thee before them' (Jer. i. 17). His spirit however did not fall. In the afternoon I felt called upon to handle the case more closely, reading the latter part of Jer. ii, and preaching from these words, 'He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul' (Psa. cvi. 15). I joined J. S. again, and found his spirit bristled up, as if he did not mean to fall.

Sept. 23. I went to see him again this evening. At first I thought him better. After a while I feared otherwise. It looked like a dead set against me, and an endeavour to show he was safe in not regarding what I thought; yet there was seriousness and sorrow with it.

Sept. 24. My fear increased. It seemed made out that J. S. was as good as gone and rent away. I had an awe of judgment, and

* See another reference to Bauley, March 1, 1847.

neither the word nor prayer comforted me, except perhaps one word, 'I am the Almighty God.'

Sept. 26. I was much affected by Mr. W. Maydwell's reading, 2 Cor. x; I thought a testimony came with it that I was acting in the Lord's fear; for I had waked in the morning with a feeling of hope and clearness as if the Lord, for his own word's sake, would help me. I sent J. S. a message that if God's time were come, which he would know by the subduedness of his heart, he should come in the evening, and I would speak to him of the snare and danger I perceived he was in. He came, but did not seem sensible of any need of that especial coming down which I had been made to feel would prove the test whether I could tell him all my heart or not. So the fear of God made me forbear; only I renewed my warning. I found the whole conversation very mortifying, for he was alternately a wasp and a preacher, but neither made honey nor hearkened to counsel. O Lord, be pleased to guide me for Christ's sake.

Sept. 27, *Friday*. All night and till after breakfast my heart sunk, and was in a measure paralysed respecting him, but I found considerable power in Mr. W. Maydwell's exposition of Job xxxvi, [Mr. Gilpin was at this time staying at his friend's house, in the North Crescent,] especially where he spoke most feelingly from verse 29, 'Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds,' whereby the Lord conceals his countenance, or the mysterious path we are to walk in? Then I glanced at the following verse, which he did not touch upon, and found a sweet power and understanding in it, 'Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it (i. e. upon those dark clouds), and covereth (by that light) the bottom of the sea.' This gave a turn to my sinking spirit. After this I began to feel great power and authority in treating the case in my ministry. I thought my text was to be this, 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?' Then it seemed made out how I was to open all in public which he had refused to hear in private. So on it went, till the whole appeared in my imagination complete, and I thought I could almost shake the chapel walls. I began from several symptoms to suspect there was a great mingling of false fire in all this, and I sat down to sift the matter in prayer. Before long one little gentle word came in, and smote this image on its feet of clay, and down it fell, golden head and all, and I had no wish at all to gather it up again. The word was this, 'thy brother,' connected with this passage, 'Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother.' Oh, the tender love it brought into my heart for that poor man under temptation! How I knew the voice; and my heart bounded with love to Christ who spoke it! I thought, Here is the spreading of his light upon the clouds. I then turned to the chapter, Matt. xviii, and the whole of it, from verse 1 to 20, seemed as if it had

been written on purpose to suit the occasion before me—a maul to his pride—a warning against his contempt of the little ones—a direction to me not to imitate the sin of Moses, because he trespassed against me—healing and love in the word 'brother,' and in Christ's reclaiming the wandering—the true spiritual authority of the ministry which the Lord ordains—ending with a beautiful word strong enough to keep us all abiding in that place where we find JESUS (ver. 20). So I went out, and did not know how sufficiently to thank and praise the Lord. I found a most merciful power and simplicity in preaching. I concluded by quoting from one of Romaine's letters, 'Some say I must go here, others there; some say I must do this, others that; I answer them all, I have Jesus with me here, and what do I want more?' Poor dear J. S. sunk and trembled before the whole. He acknowledged he had been walking in deadly pride. 'Oh, how I have been despising you all, but yourself most of all! How I trembled as you preached, lest the Lord should leave me to become a heathen man and a publican; but how infinite does this love of Jesus seem, that he should say after all he will rejoice most over the sheep which he brings back!'

CHAPTER VIII.

1845. Ezekiel's pot—Solomon's prayer—Visit to John Warner—Prayerful despondency—Relief through faith—A melting touch—Deepening of conviction—Prospect of further trial—Quotation from Erskine—Remarks—Preaching in bonds blessed.

Jan. 13. My morning subject was the parable of Ezekiel's boiling pot (chap. xxiv). It unfolded very profitably. I thought I could realize the feelings of the faithful remnant in his day who would be encouraged from his ministry to see that they were like the good and choice pieces boiled well in the pot which had water poured into it. But in the sequel he shows awfully that all who heard him were not in this blessed condition; for the city at large covered not their blood by repentance through faith, from the eye of the Lord's holy jealousy, and therefore were heaped together in the pot set on empty, or without water, on the coals, and the brass of it waxed hot and burned, and the filthiness and scum were molten in it.

March 2. I prayed that I might find a word from the Lord, and I trust not in vain. The first thing in the morning I opened the Bible, and found some entrance into that very encouraging chapter, 1 Kings viii, these words especially, 'I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.' It

brought me encouragement, whilst I considered it as shadowing forth Christ's eternal union with us. I found help in preaching; and in the afternoon felt it relieving to bring all the cases of my flock, and my own, the worst of all, and plead for mercy through Christ, or, as Solomon expresses it, in praying 'towards this house.'

March 24. I went, and several with me, to Walkern, to see JOHN WARREN, upwards of ninety years of age. He received us with much affection. His countenance kindled into life and love as he spoke. He may be called a disciple of Mr. Berridge, Vicar of Everton: and it seemed remarkable to see, fifty-two years after that good man's death, this witness to the power of his ministry still living. His account was as follows:—

'I was very wild and sinful in my youth: no thought of good things, no knowledge, no fear of sin, except now and then when perhaps I heard the bell toll. It was mostly thus with me, till one day, when I was about twenty-six years old, and was in a wood. It was a wonderful time with me. I cannot describe the hundredth part of the light, the love, and the glory, and the beauty which the Lord suddenly showed me. These words came, "Addict thyself to follow that which is good, so shall the Lord thy God surely turn unto thee." Those were the very words, and they set me praying and crying day and night. Then did the Lord show me my sinful nature, my bad heart. I was sure I was the worst sinner of all. I was crying for mercy day and night.

'I would now run for miles to hear that which was good, but I was in a sad distressed state for five years. At last I had an opportunity of going to Everton to hear Mr. Berridge, who was then very old; and he died shortly afterwards. There was a great crowd, and I stood at the church door. Soon I saw the old gentleman stretch out his hand, and pull himself up into the pulpit. Oh, how I stood ready to devour his word! "Brethren (he said) no scholarship is required to take you to heaven: Jesus Christ wants broken hearts, true beggars." My heart was ready to leap out of my body for very joy. I cannot describe my joy,—it was a true heaven on earth. Afterwards I was told I might go into his house and refresh myself, where there were many besides; and, oh, how sweet I found it to converse with them on the love of Jesus, and the experience of his blessing in the heart!

'Since then I have met with great troubles; but not one too many. When they persecute us, and call us very bad, we must not say much of that, for we know we are very bad: but it is the Lord's beauty and his mercy to us that we look at. In times of darkness how I have cried and mourned because I could not love and praise him; but when he comes back I can praise him with all my heart and soul. I have ever loved to be alone, that I might pray and meditate. Aye, there is no foot of ground on my premises on which I have not prayed for the blessing to come down,—for the faith, for the believing. And the blessing has come. How I did pray that I might know his love was for ever and ever; and so I found both these words and the fulfilment of them, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" and this again, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." When I go to the

throne of grace, I can never be satisfied without finding the blessing. It is the answer which satisfies me,—it is the beauty and love of the Lord.

'I have often been harassed by the enemy, and that for long together; and one thing I have found, that if he cannot upset us when he comes all black, he will creep in slily all white; and I have found the last to be worse than the first. I used to be dreadfully afraid, in times of darkness, that all the good was gone for ever; but I know better now. Sure I have a most sinful heart; the worst of all, I think. It is the Holy Spirit that puts in the love; and I love God, because he first loved me. My heart glows with the love, while I speak with you.'

May 17. As often heretofore I lost my hope again, and returned into thick sorrow. After visiting several of my people, which only increased my unbelieving sorrow, I returned home, and took a long solitary walk round Woodhall, where I had often, during the last two summers, spent a season of prayerful hope, but now it was prayerful despondency. Oh, how bad is my state! how weak! I am but like a cockle shell; the least blast upsets me. I had been reading Bishop Cowper's treatise on Jacob's wrestling, and was struck with this: he says Jacob was in a good way, and the Lord directed his way, and yet went forth and wrestled with him all night. So be it, Lord, if thy secret grace really be increased in our hearts. Forgive my sad mistrust.

June 15, *Sunday*. This morning I was helped in preaching from Psalm xliii. 2, 'Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?' in endeavouring to point out the causes, and how one ultimate cause may be to bring us to a deeper acquaintance with the power and efficacy of the gospel. While I was in the vestry I felt a sensible relief from the example of Aaron slaying the bullock first as a sin-offering for himself. I could believe I did the same, through faith; and found much liberty in preaching, and hope some of the holds were shaken, and consciences searched.

Sept. 7. This morning I was in a sad condition of heart. All subjects for preaching were rejected. I was afraid of them all. I groaned in the anguish of my spirit, for it appeared to me that I had no part in the mercy of God. At last I took one which seemed a forlorn hope: 'O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy' (Hab. iii. 2). I bless the Lord for it, for in preaching it greatly relieved me, and afterwards I quite enjoyed the Ordinance. Towards the end I began to feel a freeness of hope, and some power of love. An hour or two after this I had a touch which melted me. It was a prayer full of the Spirit. O Lord, make me partaker of spiritual blessings, to know and impart to others thy truth and mercy. Let this be my portion. I said, 'Oh, how different this is from all my laboured prayer this morning!' I sat down and praised the Lord. Lord, thou hast been gracious, help me to praise thee.

Sept. 29, *Monday.* On Saturday I was, as I generally have been lately, particularly tried. My convictions are strong of my ignorance and want of clearness. How can one who has not known and felt 'Woe is me; for I am undone,' before the holiness of God, and the distinct purging by the live coal, be really sent of God? This wrought with me, but I trust in the right way; for indeed I cried to the Lord Christ, the Mediator, to wash me from my presumption; and it seemed rather to turn to me for a testimony that his fear was real in my heart. I soon perverted this. At night I was hard and dark: no power of adoration. I thought, What shall I do? In the morning the legal spirit was broken by some discernment through faith, of Christ as a helpless infant, the great salvation of God. I preached twice from the Lord's blessing Egypt (Isa. xix. 19, &c.), and it was sweet to me. I considered his infinite majesty and greatness 'contracted,' as Hart says, 'to a span;' and kept begging for many blessings because the Father loves him. Shall my weak ignorance prevent his power, who to save us became as weak as a new-born child! O Lord, keep this for ever in my heart. Do, Lord.

Oct. 4. I see before me a trial I dare not face, nor yet dare shrink from. I have cried to Christ, but find a great sinking, weakening, and confusion. This last I entreat especially may be overruled, that I faint not in the ministry. It appeared to me that I should be unable to stand in the judgment; and, oh, how I feared the wrath of God for my presumption in ministering in holy things!

In the evening I was much struck with R. Erskine's sermon on these words, 'Thy maker is thy husband.' He says towards the end, 'If you would have Christ for your husband, O then, entertain his suit, and hearken to his wooing and courting motions! Is he darting light into your hearts, and letting you see the evil of some sin that formerly ye delighted in? O do not resist his suit by continuing in sin after this! Is he strengthening that light so as to set conscience on fire with the sense of sin, and apprehension of wrath? O quench not this fire until you get water out of the wells of salvation! otherwise ye reject his suit.' A hope sprang up that he was thus leading me.

[The trial that Mr. Gilpin describes in the above entries returned upon him at times, as has been already observed, for many years, while the Lord Jesus continued to press his suit (as Erskine strikingly sets it forth) of love and power, and refined his word in the heart of his servant, 'as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times.'

To behold this long patience of the Lord in thus fulfilling all the good pleasure of his will on the one hand, and to trace the power of the work of faith, whereby his servant was enabled to endure the trial, and overcome all the temptations which beset him in consequence of it, on the other, while holding fast with love that cannot

fail to the ministry that had been committed to him, is instructive and profitable. Led so gently as he had been in his own experience, standing as he did in the ministry of the word, and truly made honest, it was no wonder he was subject to much searching of heart, for the standard of Christian experience set before us in the word is a very high one. After all the apostle Paul had known, he says, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' (Phil. iii. 13, 14). At the same time the reality of a man's religion is not to be judged by his having attained to the full standard set forth in the word, but rather by his thus truly pressing after it, and continuing to do so to the end. Neither is the reality of a man's call to the ministry to be in anywise judged according to the measure of his present experience. As in the subject of this memoir, the Lord may cause the light of life to shine in the heart of one who has merely chosen the ministry (in the providence of God) as a profession, and while as yet, by reason of darkness, he himself scarcely comprehends it, its vitality may be manifested in the word he speaks, quickening the dead in sin, nourishing the quickened, and offending the carnal and worldly wise, thus becoming to the one the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life (2 Cor. ii. 16). Here, then, is the proof of such a man's call to the ministry, even its fruit, in which we behold the finger of God.

Through mercy, the eyes of many in Hertford were made to behold this, and highly to esteem the word that God had sent amongst them. On the contrary when, a few years later, Mr. Gilpin was led for a season to minister at Hitchin, there were but few who so fell under the word and found abundant blessing in it: while several, who believed they had attained to deep experience, measuring what they viewed as his less attainments by their greater, fell not under the word and profited not by it. Even where there is ground to hope the experience such prize so much has been true, is there not reason to fear its fresh savour has departed? for the fresh savour of the deep teaching of God will lead to the utmost humiliation of heart, and reverence of his hand. 'A little child,' if truly sent of him, may lead such as walk under its influence; and many such, in various places, were led and nourished by this servant of God.]

Nov. 10. I never felt myself in a worse state throughout Sunday than yesterday. It was painful to me to preach, but I trust the Lord overruled it. In the morning I took the end of Isaiah l, and in the evening Mark ix. 22, 23, 'If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' But I was greatly cast down, and had a sore feeling throughout the day that

I was left alone. This morning I rose early, and found a change for the better. That hymn,

> 'And must it, Lord, be so?
> And must thy children bear
> Such various kinds of woe,
> Such soul-perplexing fear?' &c.

was very sweet to me, and my prayers entered, and that with some persuasion that I was not alone. This comfort abode through the day. Oh, how sweet to believe the Lord is for me and with me, after fearing the contrary! [Several felt the sermons above referred to, with profit: concerning which Mr. Gilpin remarks,] When I consider my own state of mind this appears very surprising. I could not believe how it could be, but I felt encouraged that this was because the Lord would mercifully undertake for me.

Nov. 23. I desire to thank thee, O Lord, for granting me some measure of access in my early prayer, that my words and meditation might be acceptable to thee. Then the case of my dear children came upon me with this word, 'When shall I provide for my own house also?' Lord hear me, for Christ's sake. About nine o'clock I found the power to abate, and Psalm xix. 14, which I had been enabled to meditate upon, faded. It seemed that nothing was left but a few barren words. In this state I went with much fear into the pulpit, but not without faith, and I found a good time in preaching. Oh, how the word enlarged! Surely, Lord, this was thy spiritual favour and power. O direct continually my meditation and my prayer.

CHAPTER IX.

1846. Further ministerial exercises and comfort—Visits to Alice Shettlewood, Mrs. R., and Mrs. Boalter—Visits of the Rev. C. Jeffreys and of Mr. Burrell—Account of Mrs. F.—Visit to Sutton—Return home in the beginning of 1847.

Jan. 25, *Sunday.* I had great oppression through death in my spirit all yesterday evening till about ten o'clock, when I was surprised to find some intimation as if I might preach on the subject of faith; and the case of David and the Philistine came to mind, so that I retired to rest somewhat refreshed. This morning I rose as usual at six o'clock, and still found a clearness as if I should treat that subject. I continued praying till near service time with a great sense of ignorance, but not without a secret hope that this was the very best preparation. I read Heb. xi, and as soon as I began to preach the power came in, and I was greatly enlarged in hope. I was favoured with such a sweet sense of the shadow of Christ's mediation, that I felt how surely, under it, I could meet the Philistine. In the course of my sermon, speaking of the

Lord's spiritual direction, which doubtless David felt, I illustrated it by the star which appeared and disappeared, and appeared again, guiding the wise men to Christ. I found power again in the evening, especially in enforcing the exhortation from Isa. xli, 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob.' After service one came into the vestry, and told me it had sweetly encouraged her, especially as she had been led to the same passage the night before, and it had entered her heart with power. I then went to Mr. W. Maydwell's, and found him cheerful. He said he had seldom been so happy as to-day under my morning sermon, particularly after my allusion to 'the star.' Thus it appears the Lord has been gracious beyond my expectation, and not forsaken me.

Feb. 7, Saturday. On Wednesday I went to London, and returned yesterday afternoon. I was much encouraged with Mr. Burrell's sermon in the evening, finding an open ear, and a perception of the power of God. When I had left the train, and was walking home through the fields, these words arrested my attention, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,' and the Lord helped me greatly in preaching.

I then went to the Infirmary to see ALICE SHETTLEWOOD*, now dying. She was too feeble to say much, and I could not judge of her case. This morning I went to see her again. Found her evidently near her end, bewildered, and apparently without much exercise. I cannot tell how my spirit sunk. I went from her to MRS. R. Oh, what a contrast!

'Glory, glory,' she said as I entered the room, 'happiness, happiness! Come and sit down, and let me tell you. The night before last, as I lay here, the glory broke in. I was musing on the words in one of the hymns,

"Let us in his wounded side
Wash till we ev'ry whit are clean:
That's the fountain open'd wide
For filthiness and sin."

I continued turning over the words, making melody in my heart to the Lord, when such a glory came in that I said, I cannot lie here, I must rise and dance for joy. This is heaven come down to earth. Oh, to think of his glorious and eternal love to such a base sinner as I am! Shame and confusion of face are mine, but forgiveness and mercy are his. As he poured this glory into my soul he said, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." Then this followed,

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath;
Free and faithful, strong as death."

I saw from it I was his for ever and ever, and nothing could separate me from him. Unchanging love! think of it. I did wish that you and Mr. Maydwell had been with me, that we might all three have rejoiced together. What love to the brethren came in—what prayer—what a

* A History of Alice Shettlewood was published by Mr. Gilpin, but this he afterwards regretted, because her husband was still living, and therefore suppressed the sale of it.

longing that the blessed Lord would shower down his mercies on us all! Blessed and praised be his glorious name for ever and ever. Amen.'

I was greatly affected, and went from her to see MRS. BOALTER, whom I found full of tenderness and prayer. She said she had found a blessing in hearing last night, and when I quoted the words, 'Enter into the rock,' it brought the passage to mind which had been some time ago spoken upon her heart with great power, and she said, 'I've been asleep all this time that in my trouble I've forgotten my place, "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust;" and oh, I saw the Saviour was not far off! I saw him through the lattice. He showed himself, and I remembered the words of your text, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion;" and they came again, "The Redeemer SHALL come."'

I then went to poor James, and told him I thought his wife was dying. 'Go there again,' I said, 'and about three o'clock I will follow you.' Then, getting alone, I cried for Alice; and thought the Lord gave me some access. I said, 'Lord she is a poor outcast whom it seemed to have pleased thee to gather from the ends of the earth, and to have committed to my charge; and now behold her case is covered with confusion.' On my return to the Infirmary her husband met me smiling as I entered the ward. 'Sir,' he said, 'she continued in the same confusion for about half-an-hour after I came. I could do nothing but secretly pray, and confess her sin and my own; and while I did so I began to get clearer and clearer. Suddenly she broke out and said, "Oh, I have found him! I have really found him! a precious Saviour! I have been in great distress and darkness. Now I am sure he loves me."' Hearing this my own heart was melted because of the Lord's mercy, and I turned to the poor woman, who confirmed her husband's account, very slowly getting a few words out, 'Comfort ye—comfort ye—my people, saith your God.'

Feb. 12. MRS. R. gave me the following particulars of her case: 'Before this great glory came in, I had been very low and tried. For the word came suddenly into my heart, "Prepare to meet thy God;" and I felt it like a sharp sword! I said, "Now I've offended my blessed God, and what shall I do? How shall I ever meet him?" I did not know anything particular, except the continual departing of our treacherous hearts from the Lord. So I prayed and mourned and cried day and night; I had no rest. I dared not tell a creature a word of all this. At last this came in, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works." How sweet and blessed! not that I felt the joy at first, but faith was given to believe I should find it; and I was perfectly sure that the Lord accepted my lying on my sick bed, my mourning, my crying, my turning over the hymns with melody in my heart to him: and in the midst of all that, the great glory broke in.'

June 27, *Saturday*. Unbelief, working on the painful trials many of us are exposed to, had brought me into a sad state, but Psalm lxvi was so sweet in family prayer I shall not forget it: 'O bless our God . . . which holdeth our souls in life.' I could not proceed for a while. This is indeed a blessed recompense for the trouble. Yesterday I was enabled to preach with great comfort from Isaiah

xxxiii. 21, 'There the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams,' &c. This morning I took a long walk alone. I prayed for many; and the Lord seemed to favour me by giving me a little insight into his majesty, that I should fear before him. I prayed for a blessing to-morrow, that I may touch the cases of some, and put their harps in tune where I perceive a discord.

July 3, *Friday*. I hope the prayer above recorded was not in vain, for I found on Sunday much help in twice treating the case of Cornelius and Peter; and during this week heard of several who had received the word with much profit. I was especially thankful to find this was the case with one for whom I had particularly prayed, for I had thought him out of tune; and on Wednesday last in my house, at a meeting of the friends, he gave so sweet a description of the return of the Lord to him, and of the power he had felt since Sunday in reading the case of Cornelius, that it touched the hearts of all present.

On Monday my brother-in-law, Charles Jeffreys, came to Mrs. Willoughby's, and remained till yesterday evening. His visit has left a sweet savour. Several of us, and I amongst the number, attended his morning readings. I shall not forget his piercing, humbling, stripping, tender, clear, and simple words on Psalm cxlvii and Hosea vi, especially the last. How he brought it, by the grace of God with him, clothed with light and authority into my conscience. It emptied me, and yet gave me hope. Several acknowledged the same.

Aug. 4, *Tuesday*. On Saturday, having heard of the rapid progress of dear Mrs. F.'s illness, I said to Mr. Burrell [then on a visit], 'If you will preach twice for me to-morrow I shall have a burden off my mind which will enable me this day to go to London and see our friend.' He consented, and I set off. She could only speak in a whisper, expressed much conflict, but a sure and stedfast cleaving by faith to Jesus, and many sweet encouraging words, such as, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee,' which made her say, 'He hath done all things well. I can justify him through all. O thank him for kindly giving me power to do so!'

While we were conversing a tremendous storm came on, which had been brewing for some time, the heat being excessive. For two hours the elements raged; never since 1811 do I remember such an explosive storm and prodigious rain. I was thus unable to get to Shoreditch Terminus before seven, and therefore slept in Charles Street. I had a quiet talk with C., which made me glad I had come.

I rose early, and felt some power in Psalm lxxxvi, which enabled me to speak from it in the morning reading. After which I returned to Hertford. I was a solitary passenger in an immensely crowded train full of gay Sabbath-breakers; but was kept exceedingly quiet, and from the peace and tenderness within judged the Lord was near. My anxiety was lest, if my arrival should be too

late for the beginning of the service, there would be confusion, it being Ordinance day; but I was occupied in prayer and meditation, and I remembered the word, 'Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine.' I reached the chapel door at nearly a quarter past eleven, just as the people began to be at a loss. There was not the least hurry or confusion in my spirit. Mr. Burrell preached from Isaiah liii, and at the Ordinance I found great power and enlargement. It was very uniting to me to have Mr. Burrell amongst us; and his spirit as meek as the man Moses. Many heard with much comfort. Yesterday we had a large meeting at Mr. Davies's. Mr. Burrell spoke of the mediation of Christ, which comforted me: I was otherwise very low. This morning he expounded Psalm cvii. It was the fullest exhibition of experimental truth I ever heard. It cut my spirit to pieces from a sense of my grievous conceit, but I saw the land of milk and honey through it: yet I tremble indeed.

[MRS. F. (a physician's wife, referred to in the above entry) was one of those members of Mr. Gilpin's congregation in St. Andrew's Church who continued under his ministry after he resigned his living. As a natural person she was very remarkable for the generosity of her disposition, which was combined with a simplicity and humility of character seldom equalled. From her childhood she had been the subject of a work of grace, which she understood not, until, under Mr. Gilpin's ministry, she was awakened to a sense of the value of that secret voice of God upon her conscience, which she had been made to hear. And though, as she afterwards felt, the things of this life still engrossed her affections too much, it was evident from the words that from time to time were applied to her soul with power, that God was even then laying the foundation of that deep and powerful work whereby he eventually brought her to glorify him, even 'in the fires.'

In process of time she was attacked by a most painful and fatal disorder. Many other trials also gathered around her, and above all she felt that the Lord himself drew near in great majesty, although in infinite mercy, and entered into judgment with her. The following extracts from her conversations with Mr. Gilpin during her last illness, and after her removal to London, together with some of his remarks concerning her case, will suffice to show the power of the humbling work of grace that was wrought in her, with its most blessed fruits of self-abasement, and of godly sorrow that 'worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.' We cannot rightly look upon such cases without fear and trembling; yet, so to behold them is most profitable, as Hart truly says,

'A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Ghost has made him so.']

NOTES OF MRS. F.'S CONVERSATIONS. 1846.

'Now I am in deep affliction. The hand of God has gone out against me, seemingly in all directions. For two months I have been in a great storm. I have feared greatly lest death should find me unprepared; but this fear has been mercifully taken away, and I have had from time to time sweet intimations of the Lord's lovingkindness. I am now in the

midst of the seas. Oh, how black, how fearful, how dreadful! How I have feared, and do fear! Will the Lord look? Will he give me one smile? Oh the perception I have of his almighty sovereign grace being needful for me! I follow him up and down all day long in my spirit. My spirit is always crying unto him. Though he seems far off, yet I am sure he has not given me this spirit for nothing. I am sure he will not cast me off. I have a perception of the dreadful deceitfulness of the heart, such as I cannot tell you. I would caution every one not to make light of the word of God. The word of God came to me long ago, "For all these things God will bring thee into judgment." It followed me everywhere; but, oh, how I shrank from it! But now the judgment has overtaken me, yet it is not without mercy. Though I tremble deeply, the Lord is most kind to me; and I am enabled to justify him in all things—this I am very glad of, I am enabled to justify him in all things. But when I look at my trouble I feel alone. No friend in heaven or earth to lean upon, except him. If this prop were taken away, I should sink in despair.

'My affliction grows worse; yet it is not long since I fell asleep, and dreamt I saw springing forth a cluster of beautiful leaves, and a white stem ending in three bright points. I waked, and felt such a spiritual power on my heart that I meditated on what the meaning might be, and soon afterwards there was brought to me the feeling of the love of the Father and of the Son, through the Holy Ghost, and that these Three are One. Then the scripture flowed in,—The Spirit shall dwell in them, the Father loveth them, and I, says Christ, love them; and we will come unto them and make our abode with them. Oh, I thought, is this to be the fruit of my affliction?

'I may say I am fully in the battle now. I have not been fully in it long. I hope it may prove the good fight of faith. I know that the religion, which of late has gradually laid so deep hold upon me, is the same in kind as I have felt by touches ever since I was ten years old; only for many years I did not understand its meaning. It was never explained to me till I began to enter into the spirit of your ministry at Hertford. By degrees I came to a little understanding of the work of God in the heart of a converted sinner; then I found great love to your cause, believing it was the cause of God. And it was sweet to me in those days to read the scriptures, for they opened to me more and more.

'After a few years, going one day with my family to Tewin, as I was walking there with my children, I was taken ill on the bridge, and went into the lodge; and there I expected to die. Oh, how I sank in my feelings! It was as if I became as nothing; I cannot describe the degree in which I felt my nothingness. I saw and felt also that I had nothing to plead why the Lord should have mercy, except the merits of Christ only; and I did plead them. The Lord heard me, and came in with a little hope.

'At last the illness, which I had dreaded for years, began to lay strong hold upon me. I was very unwilling to admit the worst. I had now a deeper discernment of the evil of sin; and fears of my state before God began to be stronger and stronger. I was lying awake one night, and, oh, how the 2nd chapter of Ephesians shone into my heart! How unspeakably beautiful it was! "You hath he quickened, who were dead in

trespasses and sins." How it brought love with it—love to the Lord, and to all who bear his image! But you see trials have increased as well as encouragements. I have been often warned of those things in the midst of which I now am. For now I am in a great strait. I am enclosed. I am hedged up. God's hand touches me in my body, my spirit, my circumstances, and leaves me nothing to do but to follow hard after him. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." By that man lives, and I live. You see, afflicted as I am, I am at a point. For the word fell upon me one day while yet I lived in Hertford, "You are my witness." I have never forgotten it, nor forgotten one word of all that the Lord spoke to me from the very beginning. I want no other religion, for I have found the true one; and, afflicted as I am, I would not give it up for worlds. Yes, and I find, moreover, that from the beginning to this present day, not one word of all he has spoken to me has failed.'

At a later period she said, 'I am "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," and can by faith lay hold of that word; also of this, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." And of this also, "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." The little faith I have enables me to cling to Christ, my only hope. I do not now repine at the Lord's dispensations, I dare not; but my heart is very evil. I know not how it may be with me unless the Lord keep me. Death seems to me, at times, very terrible: I shrink from it; but if the Lord Jesus will let me feel his everlasting arms, that will do! The 103rd Psalm is very comfortable, especially this part, "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." But I have a cross to bear: and Christ had a cross to bear. I sometimes think I see him, by faith, bearing his cross; and these words come, "The servant is not greater than his lord;" then I think this means I shall yet have a cross to bear: and I cannot bear it alone; I fly to him. I feel my safety lies in clinging to his cross. I have no other hope.' [Mr. Gilpin proceeds:—]

The above seems to have been an intimation given to her of the return of severer affliction: for suffering, both of body and mind, did increase, and brought her low indeed. Her state during the last few weeks of her life was one of great conflict, and she appeared to her own feelings to have scarcely strength to endure it; yet supported and comforted she was, though not triumphant; and, oh, how humbly she spoke of herself, how she abased herself, condemned herself, and made Jesus her refuge alone! We saw and knew that he was near; though holy awe abounded, because these were days of great tribulation.

I cannot give an orderly account of what followed; enough only to trace the footsteps of God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises. In my first interview with her after this period, I found her in much exercise of spirit; 'But,' she added, 'after much trial, I found a clearness of hope in these words, "His banner over me was love."' On the next occasion she manifested still more conflict, but a standard was lifted up against the enemy, enabling her, as she said, to 'wait for the consolation of Israel.' As I read with her a passage out of the 14th of John, her countenance beamed with joy, and she said, 'Aye; and other parts of that chapter have been most sweet to me, for the Lord has certainly

spoken upon my heart, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."' A few days afterwards I found her still tried. When I reminded her of the same words, it arrested her trouble, which was almost overpowering, and she said, 'So the Lord *did* speak to me, but I had quite forgotten it; my memory fails me. Oh the state I am in, as if I should sink for ever! and then I forget the Lord's sweet words to me.' At the same time she showed me how stricken through and through she was with the spiritual conviction of her lost estate in herself. 'I keep saying, Will he really help and save me? What a hypocrite I feel in myself! I used to be pleased with myself; now I loathe and abhor myself. Now I understand the words which I remember hearing long ago in Hertford, "Jesus is ALL."'

One afternoon she was in great distress, and cried, 'My soul! my immortal soul! what shall I do?' She desired a friend might be sent for. Soon afterwards the words came to her, 'Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils,' and she said she saw from it that her desire for a friend was inordinate, and she was quieted.

She was exceedingly comforted by one of Hart's hymns, which she would often have read to her, and said frequently, 'One line in it keeps following me continually,

"And from the affliction take the curse."'

Often she dwelt on the words, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee;' and would say, 'I cling—I cling—I cleave to Jesus:' and once when asked how she was, replied strongly, 'Waiting for Christ.'

Once, after much conflict, she fell asleep, and waking up with a most heavenly brightness in her countenance, said, 'Oh, how it keeps whispering, "I am the way, the truth, and the life!"' which words continued to refresh her often. Soon after this, in the night, she said, 'I have had a gleam of such sweet resignation as I cannot express. It was only for a moment, but, oh, it was such a gleam!' Whenever this peace of God, though only in a passing gleam, shone in her countenance, it was wonderful to our sight.

A day or two before her death she spoke with great comfort of the words, 'The Lord is my Redeemer;' and confirmed it afterwards to an enquiring friend, pointing with her hand, and with a very marked countenance, saying, 'Yes, that is it! He is the way, the truth, and the life.' Her pain and weakness were extreme, and latterly she was scarcely able to speak, and frequent delirium came on. The last day of her life the delirium left her, though she scarcely noticed any one. She lay quite quiet and apparently happy, and her breath gradually ebbed away on Tuesday night, September 8th, 1846.

In cases like these we see and know but a small part. Enough there was to bring us to this conclusion, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.'

Dec. 4. *Sutton Coldfield.* I left London at 11 A.M. with my children for this place, where we arrived safely about 6 P.M. I felt

a favourable change (after the return of many fears), love to the Lord's cause and people, and a shining of peace as if to assure me of the Lord's approbation. After conversing with several of the friends who came in, I read the Psalm, 'Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions.' It was very suitable to our low and desolate condition:—the ark 'in the fields of the wood.' It seemed quite to warm the hearts of the friends; and we parted very affectionately for the night.

Dec. 13, *Sunday.* I rose as usual at six, and began to pray. I soon was sensible of a touch which led me to the Lord's prayer, on which I fed, and remembered all the dear absent flock, at Hertford especially. It was long before my subject for the morning preaching was confirmed, but at last I felt it so—the 133rd Psalm—the true spiritual unity. In preaching I felt it sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. It encouraged a comforting hope that I am sent to a little hill of Zion, where the Lord is pleased to put his name, and to command his blessing. In the evening I preached from part of Rom. v, 'We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' There seemed to me a particular opening of it, as if, according to my measure, I could go through the whole; both glorying in tribulation for the reason given, and also loving the Lord through the influence of the Holy Ghost.

Dec. 21, *Monday.* Yesterday morning early I felt very low, barren, and empty; but afterwards such a sweetness from the Lord's prayer that I preached from it; and again the Lord confirmed the word. I found a revival, beyond all expectation, as if the strength and life in my spirit would now continue. In the evening I preached from these words, 'He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint' (Luke xviii. 1). The room was very crowded, so that I laboured under much fatigue. After service I liked the quiet way that some spoke to me. This morning I hope the Lord touched my sad heart. I had endeavoured long to pray, but, as it seemed, in vain, so great was the power of death on my spirit. I went out, and gave a believing look to Jesus, and felt assured the Lord could not refuse that claim. This strengthened me. In narrowly looking at this exercise of faith, I perceived the deceitfulness ready to come in,—to trust in the faith, not in Christ its object. I confessed my sin, and turned again to Christ. This sort of work spoils self-conceit. Lord, grant it may fully do so. Amen.

Dec. 24. I went out and called on old Mrs. Adams. She referred to a letter from Mr. Bourne, which I had read to her last night, about 'the tinkling bell at the shop-door.' She said, 'I know what Mr. Bourne meant, for he had some work with me, because I used to keep the shop open on Wednesday evenings, thinking it

would be injurious to close it. His reproofs really did drive me to the Lord, till at last, entreating that the Lord would clear my way and make known his will, these words entered my heart powerfully, "Them that honour me I will honour;" and since then I have always closed my shop, and gone to hear the word, and that gladly.' I was strengthened in my own soul by the clear and spiritual conversation, both of her and others.

Dec. 28, *Monday.* Yesterday morning I was a good deal tried. Though I had felt some power from Isaiah xliii, I was afraid of the subject. At last I prayed very earnestly that the Lord alone would guide me; and in this spirit felt encouragement to take these words, 'Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel' (Mark i. 14, 15). Indeed the Lord most graciously opened the word with power, especially this clause, 'the time is fulfilled.' Surely he owned me as his servant indeed. In the evening I was not made to enjoy an equal power, still the whole subject arrested and edified me. It was from this in James iv. 6–10, 'But he giveth more grace,' &c. I felt this part most profitable, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you:' also that, where he speaks of sinners and double-minded, he does not say 'Begone,' but he says 'Wash and be clean.'

1847. *Jan.* 1, *Friday.* In the prospect of a gathering of the people last evening, I had prayed much that there might be a blessing. I hope the Lord answered me, for I never saw in a little company deeper attention, or more cordial expression of having received good. This morning I had felt cast down, but a spring of gratitude and comfort entered my heart. Temptation came in, but the Lord mercifully strengthened me, and I enjoyed praying for myself, and many, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Jan. 12. [On leaving Sutton, Mr. Gilpin writes,] I felt some comforting sense of the Lord's support, believing he had blessed my visit here. I also found some establishment of hope to believe that he will stand by this little company, and show that the cause is his own. Grant it, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Jan. 15. *Hertford.* On Wednesday we arrived safely at my sister's in Charles Street. The next morning I was comforted by Mr. Bourne's reading, from Jer. xv, 'O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering,' &c. He spoke most fully on the defence which the tender fear of God proves against all that would upset us. I thought of my intercourse with some at Sutton, and was thankful to feel a sweet conviction that defence had been mine; and it turned to me for a testimony that the Lord had been gracious to me. We related to each other our respective proceedings: he was greatly encouraged with many in Hertford, and they also had received him 'as an angel.' This showed me the kind hand of the Lord, who

thus established what I had been led to hope when first, in the early part of last November, my way was cleared to go to Sutton.

'This God is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable friend;
Whose love is as large as his power,
And knows neither measure nor end.
'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.'

CHAPTER X.

1847, 1848. A season of prayer—Help in preaching—C. A. Bauley—Satan's sifting—A touch of free sovereign grace—Renewals of trouble and consolation confirming his ministry—Conversation of Mrs. R.—Remarkable dream and conversation of a friend—Strengthened with might.

Jan. 19. I was very low, tried, and scattered in heart yesterday. This morning I found in the early hours, by the Lord's mercy, a season of refreshing in prayer. Faith in Christ, and a deep acknowledgment of my own depravity, was refreshing to me. I was also particularly led out in prayer for every one of my family according to the will of God in his covenant; for my congregation; and the churches especially at Pulverbach and Sutton. Deliver me, for Christ's sake, from self-righteousness and dependance on myself, which always check, yea, quench this spirit of prayer.

Feb. 27, *Saturday.* I seemed for several days and throughout yesterday to have a light from Ex. xv. 23–26, as if the Lord gave me the word to help me in warning my hearers of the danger some of them are in through a censorious spirit. I looked upon this as one of 'the diseases of Egypt;' and, as in consequence some of my congregation find the waters bitter, I cautioned them not to murmur, but, like Moses, to cry to the Lord till he show them that Tree which has virtue to make the bitter sweet.

I cannot express how the comfort of this faded out of my heart afterwards; and this day, how I have been prostrated through unbelief and dejection! Make haste unto me, O God, that I may fight the good fight of faith through these hosts of enemies.

March 1, *Monday.* Yesterday morning I was tranquil in spirit, under some impression of the Lord's power and light; and I preached twice from part of 1 Peter i, beginning at the words, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,' &c. In the morning I read Ex. xv, and in the evening Isa. liii. Both these portions were very suitable to the line in which I was led in the discourses. It pleased God

mercifully to revive in the morning all I had felt the preceding week from Ex. xv, so that I may say I preached my Friday evening sermon over again, with more distinctness and, in my own feelings, with more power. I felt, especially in the evening, a peculiar spirit of prayer for some: as if the Lord acknowledged my labours kindly.

[The case of C. A. BAULEY, which was noticed June 8, 1844, is here a little enlarged upon by an extract from Mr. Gilpin's memoir of him, after which the diary proceeds in reference to him further.]

Being naturally an ambitious man, he could not always well submit to his dependent position. While pressed under this burden he had been suddenly arrested by these words, 'Thou canst not add one cubit to thy stature.' A divine reproof from these words had cut him down, and they wrought painfully in his heart for a time: but afterwards prayer, faith, and patience began to operate, he was satisfied with the Lord's dispensations, and the power of temptation was broken. In this state the same words returned with their former weight, 'Thou canst not add one cubit to thy stature;' but now they softened and comforted his heart, so that he yielded himself wholly and only into the Lord's hands, satisfied that his will was right. The next day afterwards was a high day; for the Lord returned to him in the power of his redeeming love, filled him with joy, and dissolved his heart in thankfulness and praise.

This account [Mr. Gilpin writes] was very instructive to me. I think I have never read the words since without thinking of the mercy and the profiting which Bauley found in them. 'Thou canst not add one cubit to thy stature:' therefore be content to be low; seek not great things for thyself: learn to rejoice in this, that the Lord gives you the heritage of those who fear his name.

About a month after this, namely in April 1846, I baptized in the public service his little son A. C., and I believe on that day the Lord was present with his ordinance, and blessed it, I may say, to many. I preached afterwards from Ezra viii. 21–23, 'Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.' The child's father was much comforted; and in the course of the day afterwards, conversed with several of us in a very uniting manner.

Speaking on this occasion of the tribulation attending the way of life, he said to my friend, Mr. Spence, 'I have a near relation in Suffolk, who knows the right doctrine well, and can talk over the whole Bible; but I observe that he always leaves the trouble out, and it's no use my trying to do that: so he and I can never agree. I think I may say that at least nine-tenths of my religion is trouble.' 'True,' replied Mr. Spence, 'but then the remaining tenth is the Lord's.' This remark pleased him greatly; for he often insisted much upon that especial trouble which is

needful for us, I mean the painful humbling which attends the application of God's truth to the soul: nevertheless we must cleave to that truth exclusively, which always lifts up in due time those whom it brings low.

March 3. Bauley has been ill for several months, and scarcely able in consequence to carry on his laborious business, yet not so weak as to justify his giving it up. This position is trying, and together with some sharp domestic troubles, and his anxiety for his large family of little children, renders his lot an afflictive one. I remember his expressing a very tender entrance into the following lines:

'Then help me by thy grace to bear,
Whate'er thou send'st to purge my dross;
If in his crown I hope to share,
Why should I grudge to bear his cross?'

Soon afterwards he told me how all his fears and troubles had been overpowered by a blessed entrance into these words, 'It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.' His heart and countenance glowed while he dwelt upon the sweet power of Christ's mediation unfolded to him in those words. He added, 'Very often, sir, it is only this with me, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept;" but, oh, when the change comes, how blessed!'

To-day he spoke to this effect, 'How I entered into the words as you read them on Sunday, "The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Yet the wonder is to see in a moment that Christ is the way, and to find ourselves quite at rest in him. Oh, what a work it is to have the heart searched! I seem to myself never to have known anything about the corruption of my nature before now. Oh, that power of the evil which I feel, and yet I hate it! I am against it altogether, and yet there it is, plaguing me! How angry I am with myself, to find myself doubting, mistrusting, reasoning, planning, instead of believing in the Lord; who has given me the greatest reason to trust him, and shown me over and over again his clear love! I have from my childhood had a fear and a faith, as I have often described to you. I remember the first word of God which ever came to my heart was from Matthew vi, and like this, Be not careful for to-morrow; and do not fear. I did then believe that God spake those words and would fulfil them: and whenever in late years I have been brought to the full faith, I have looked back and seen it was the very same I had then. How I have loved his word, and do love it! How I have loved his people, and do love them! How the Lord brings me to be nothing! There I am; and then it is that he is all to me. I have been reading much in the Proverbs lately: how they have spoken to me, and shown me that wisdom which I love and value above all things I can name. Yet, what a thing it is to feel the enticings of evil, notwithstanding all this love! The Lord indeed has done me good by afflicting me. How hard and independent would my spirit have been, had he not brought me down, humbled me, darkened my way, disappointed my schemes, and given me faith. I get so down that I can't see how I shall ever be right again. He shows me this is for my sins. How I hate them, and hate myself because of them! And then in a moment, through the Lord's mercy to me, when I am at my very worst, behold I am suddenly quite

right again; and see all I want, and have it too: and am all at once *that blessed*, that I hardly know what to make of myself.'

May 15, *Saturday*. I have been pressed lower, and feel for the most part in a very sad place: convinced of my want of conviction, and all the train of charges for presumption, and faith without root, in consequence. Every prospect before me seems to wither. I feel no power of conduct, and my prayers seem unsound, unbelief is very rampant, so is self-pity, and hardness of heart. I endeavour (almost in vain) to hope. Bishop Cowper says the effect of Satan's sifting us is that the wheat passes through and is gone, only the refuse remains. I endeavour to hope it will prove no worse, and that Jesus will deliver me. I preached last night from the words, 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,' &c. (Luke xxii. 31, 32). I felt it at the time, and still more in writing down the sketch of my sermon this morning; but whether I look up or down, I behold clouds and fears and doubts. O Lord, have effectual mercy.

May 17, *Monday*. I continued throughout Saturday in a very desolate frame, and expected yesterday would prove a heavy day; but in the morning, about seven o'clock, I found a change in my own feelings which I was enabled to regard as a touch from the Lord. My hard unbelieving gloom, like the barren heath of the desert, entirely passed away. Hope, and a sense of the freeness and comfort of grace, entered instead, and I was led to Psalm c, as descriptive of what I enjoyed: 'Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,' &c. I cannot describe the change; I can only say it was so, and that I could not have brought it; that it was attended with love, light, and liberty. I remembered twice before I had felt the very same as a special help in preaching. Once when preaching from Isaiah xi, 'The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp;' and a second time at Sutton Coldfield, while preaching from the words, 'From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent.' It was a sweet touch of free sovereign grace, that showed me after all our fruitless bewildering, and legal toiling, ALL that blesses us is this only, 'Jesus came unto them.' I am the more particular in stating this, because, in my present sad wintry state, the reality of all these things is speedily denied in my heart. O Lord, strengthen me.

June 20, *Sunday*. Lord, suffer me, while I may, to record that I now believe thou hast helped me this day. I was sorely entangled with spiritual death yesterday and this morning. I was as a man without life, except the corrupt life. The whole word was a barren and sandy desert. I fell down and cried to be helped once more, and going to chapel felt a little spring enabling me to preach from these words, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ,' &c.

(Heb. ix. 14). But, oh, how refreshing it proved to my soul! how faith and hope suddenly plumed themselves! Is not this, Lord, thy favour, because thy gifts and calling are without repentance, and having called me to the ministry thou wilt maintain me in it? Grant it, O Lord, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Aug. 30, *Monday.* I was brought again into a cold, hard, lifeless frame, in which the whole Bible seemed as I may say dried up. At night I walked to Ware and back through the Park, where I groaned and yet remembered the happy change which I had there felt on Friday after crying very desolately. On Sunday morning I spent a desolate hour in prayer from six to seven, but, very gradually and almost imperceptibly, some breathings were felt, 'In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee' (Ex. xx. 24); and, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD' (Psa. lxxi. 16). I took the last in the morning, and found it very instructive. There seemed marrow in it for my fainting soul. But afterwards I was worse than ever. The subject in Ex. xx was the only one I could take, and that only from having before felt a breathing of hope in it. My present feelings were such that I was afraid of it altogether. The fear of handling it almost overcame me. I went down to chapel mourning, saying over and again in my spirit, 'A workman that *needeth* to be ashamed.' I had not proceeded far before the Lord graciously enlarged my heart. The Lord's recording of his name, the writing upon us his new name, the strong tower of the name Jesus, became my desire and my hope; and when service was over I said, 'Lord, I am thy servant, and ordained of thee to preach. I thank thee, O Lord.'

Oct. 23, *Saturday.* Yesterday I felt much conviction, fear, unbelief, and all evils in the morning. I went from place to place to accomplish some trifling matters, but should not have done so had not I found that while thus engaged the Lord helped me, and kept my heart fixed on better things; and returning home by the gasometer my prayer and hope were stedfast, and I thought I prevailed in a measure that the Lord would do me good by that word, 'I will pour upon the house of David,' &c. (Zech. xii. 10). The Lord also caused a spring of hope to show me I should fix my eye on Christ, however bad I was or had been, for the joy of the Lord would prove to be my strength. This did not forsake me in preaching from the words.

After service MRS. R. came into the vestry, and gave me a sweet account. I was aware that for some time, and especially last week, she had been bowed down with intense conflict, and had been unable to find more than little sips of comfort, just to support her. But last Sunday my sermon on the transfiguration of Christ helped her, and she went home revived from the words, 'The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.' Gradually the glorious and truly spiritual light filled her whole soul, 'Oh, Mr. Gilpin, it was, indeed it was above

the brightness of the sun!' During the night the Lord returned to her with the gentle entrance of these words, 'I am come into my garden,' there was no more of the verse. It was indeed most clear he had been with her, gathering his myrrh and his spice. Humility, contrition, repentance, self-abhorrence, adoration, thanksgiving all combined; and she expressed them all with great sweetness. The Lord also renewed words which had been rendered most memorable to her, 'Now look up, and see! You have been bowed down: now look up!' She said:—

'It has been almost more than I could bear, Mr. Gilpin; the glory has been so great. I came here this evening all of a totter, under the power of his great goodness and mercy. Who, but the Lord, knows what I have gone through before this comfort came? I feared I should find no more help; yet it seems strange I should, after all the times the Lord has blessed me; but such is my unbelief! I had been pressed almost above measure, but now I am pressed down with the joy. I did not go about to tell folks what I was passing through; and I don't go about telling them of my joy now: but indeed it is unspeakable! Help me to praise him. It's worth pressing on for.'

Nov. 26, *Friday.* This day I have felt fears respecting my own salvation, but, though with difficulty falling under them and looking for mercy, faith was given me to believe that Christ had died for me, and that my groaning was not in vain. After this, part of Isa. lxiv appeared very inviting, yet I lapsed into a state in which it seemed in vain to expect any profit from my evening preaching, but as the time drew near I sunk into nothing, saying, Lord be thou present; and, oh, how strengthening it was to me to preach! 'But now, O LORD, thou art our father,'—NOW, when 'thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities,'—then comes in the living hope through Christ's resurrection; and I believe this hope abounded in my own heart.

Dec. 26, *Sunday.* Yesterday was Christmas Day. I had service once, and found but little comfort and peace; yet some power in my sermon on 'a little child shall lead them.'

But now will I praise the Lord who seemed this day to put the lyre into my hand, and teach me to guide it skilfully. I was very low in the morning, but a measure of faith with prayer was granted me to believe in the Lord's unchangeable calling of grace. I felt certain cases greatly pressed upon me, with some twinkling from Heb. xiii. 5, 6, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' I did not at first feel this confirmed, and kept asking for a subject; but, behold, at last it came to this, 'You have one.' So, bless the Lord, I found. I read Psalm lxxxix, and brought in Joshua's case, and Psalm xxvii. How inexpressibly sweet,—how soul arresting I found it! It dropped as the rain and distilled as the dew. Lord, wast thou not present in thy favour?

1848. *Feb.* 26. I felt the stamp of a subject for preaching upon, viz. the blessing of Levi, in Deut. xxxiii, yet I had not considered it, and now there seemed no time left. At last I turned to the Lord, and surely it opened most sweetly and simply, 'Let thy light and thy perfection be with thine Holy One' (not in thine own keeping), vers. 8–11. How rich and instructive it was! How it magnified Christ!

April 8. After visiting several, I called upon Miss J. S., who had been ill, but much comforted in mind; and her conversation was solid and encouraging. I was referring to what I had myself felt from these words, 'I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.' She said:—

'That puts me in mind of what happened a week or two since to myself. I had been conversing about the second coming of Christ, and my mind being deeply impressed, I fell asleep and dreamt that I saw him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. All men saw him with me. And the moment that he touched the earth, in a manner that I cannot describe, he compassed the whole breadth of it at once, and entered into every heart, and into my own, in an instant of time. I saw and felt the truth awfully. Every heart was convinced at once: when suddenly a voice came, 'It is delayed,' and the whole glory vanished: and all men, and myself amongst them, returned to our former darkness. This change astonished and alarmed me. I fell down confessing my sin, and in doing so I awoke and found it was a dream.'

[On another occasion the same friend gave the following account, which Mr. Gilpin thus put down:—]

On a certain Sunday, being confined to her house, she found in the morning great trial, and very sore temptation: almost beyond all that she had ever endured. All around her seemed happy and free. Then it appeared to her that she was become the victim of delusion, and there was no escape for her. In this distressing state she turned to the scriptures, and read the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians through, with the most desolate and dark feelings, till she reached these words, 'Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.' Here the Lord powerfully arrested her soul, and manifested to her Christ made a curse—made under the law—to procure our redemption. The deep views of the awful nature of the curse, the love of Christ in delivering her soul from it, were opened to the utmost she could bear. Everything then appeared but 'loss' and 'dung' for this infinite glory of Christ her Saviour; and throughout that day and the two following, the continual sounding of the words, 'Looking unto Jesus,' brought with them peace and love most perfect. The night following, in this state of pure spiritual joy, she fell asleep, and felt that she was hearing the word and could not bear its searching power, and withdrawing herself from its influence she was arrested with the flame of God's wrath, and thrown into hell. Yet she cried vehemently for deliverance, and was thus awaked. Then, remembering the sweet peace

in which she had closed her eyes, she said, 'But may I not look again?' She did so, when the same power and glory and love of Christ returned, and filled her with unutterable joy. The effect was very sober and humbling in her heart.

June 17. I had felt a breathing from this word, 'Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' So I preached from it, and it very gently unfolded and became a lovely word. In the vestry afterwards I was visited with a calm persuasion of the Lord's mercy and approbation, such as I have seldom found. After my return home I walked round Rickness by moonlight. It was a lovely night, and the nightingales yet sung in the little dell, but the sweet power of my text was something better still beyond comparison, 'Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' Strengthened, not in the old man, but in the new: not by any self-wrought power, only by the Spirit: not to be at ease, but to fight.

CHAPTER XI.

1848, 1849. Ministry at Hitchin—The winnowed little—Conviction in sleep—Visits to Mrs. Boalter and Mrs. R.—Searching and encouragement—Another visit to Mrs. R.—Ear not open to discipline—Visit to T. Hastings—The Lord's messenger—Revival of Eccles. xi—Visits a poor man on his death-bed.

[It will be remembered that in the year 1840 Mr. Gilpin was invited to preach at Hitchin; but that, though he felt much unity in spirit with some in that neighbourhood, there did not appear, at that time, the opening for his statedly ministering to them. Now he was again solicited, and a plan proposed for him to preach there every Tuesday evening. He writes concerning this as follows:—] It awakened much prayer, wherein I was favoured with a reverential sense of the Lord's majesty extinguishing all desire for finding any calling or testimony except his only. Also the remembrance of and power to plead the words, 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it,' was attended with some hope of the Lord's blessing. [He writes further,] Mr. Horn has done everything in the most friendly and prudent manner: and has established the meeting on the footing that no one but myself, or my representative, shall preach there; but that the friends who wish it are to assemble for a prayer-meeting on the Sundays when I cannot be there.

Aug. 29, *Tuesday.* Arrived at Wymondly [on *Saturday*], I endeavoured to meditate and fix upon a subject for the morning preaching, but could satisfy myself with none. I rose the next morning at six, as usual; and the moment I began to think of

preaching, these words dropped into my heart, 'Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.' I immediately felt, This is of the Lord, and I must preach from these words. What confirmed the hope in my heart was this:—On the Wednesday before, as I was returning home, the above words were sweet and fresh in my heart; so that I then hoped they might be my subject at the opening of the chapel. I thought that surely, however divine the power of the words in my heart, if I kept them for a week in my polluted vessel I should spoil all; so I prayed, 'Lord, if this is of thee, keep the words in thine own hands till the time comes that I am to make use of them.' In a short time the words withdrew, and I even forgot them; and though my attention had been called to Ex. xxiv, and particularly riveted upon the whole chapter, I never once looked on to the beginning of ch. xxv, wherein those words occur. When therefore they dropped into my heart on Sunday morning I was satisfied it was the Lord's mercy which brought them.

I walked by myself from Wymondly to Hitchin, and found a goodly assembly, and preached with much comfort from the above words. There seemed to be a tender spirit among the people. In the evening I read my address [exhorting them to spiritual unity, and stating his views on church discipline, &c.], and also preached briefly from Isa. iv. 5, 'The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.' The room was very full, but cannot accommodate much above a hundred. I was made to feel that the Lord brought me to a scattered flock of his own. [This feeling was much confirmed in visiting from time to time some of his hearers.]

Oct. 23, *Monday.* Early yesterday morning, part of Psalm xcvi arrested me, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.' Soon afterwards a conviction of the little degree in which the holy grace is felt, brought me low: but both these together seemed to issue in the words, 'Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith' (Prov. xv. 16). I saw that the 'little' was that winnowed little which is left in the heart which has true faith, and the words became unutterably clear and sweet in preaching from them. In the evening I took the conclusion of Heb. ii, from ver. 10, and while in the pulpit, during the second singing, how awful the light revealing the truth became! It is only in his light that we see light. Lord, have mercy upon me.

Nov. 2, *Thursday.* When at Hitchin on Tuesday, as I walked through the Park to Chalton, several parts of John iv began to brighten; and while I was meditating alone, I felt encouraged to take for my text these words, 'He must needs go through Samaria.' I can truly say I never in all my life felt it sweeter to preach.

I commented on the whole case of the woman of Samaria, and then dwelt upon this verse, 'If thou knewest the gift of God,' &c. The love I felt to the Lord and his flock reconciled all things in my heart, nor did I wonder that after service several told me they were greatly refreshed. I spent a comfortable night afterwards; but in my sleep towards morning, the words above quoted, 'If thou knewest,' &c., became as a sword, and pierced me through with conviction, under which I fell and humbled myself; and when I waked, I found this spirit of humiliation and tenderness indeed. It turned to me for a testimony, and I returned to Hertford.

Dec. 22. MRS. BOALTER was in a tender frame, full of life and love. She said, 'Last night I had a sweet lift at supper time. There was but little for me to eat, when, behold, the words came, "The cattle upon a thousand hills are mine:" also, "I feed my sheep; my scattered sheep." At that word "scattered," the comfort did so enter my heart that I think I never had so sweet a supper.'

MRS. R. was yesterday rejoicing in the Lord, remembering her great deliverance. She said, 'I feel very comfortable, for I lay awake for hours this morning remembering the Lord's mercy, and entreating him to give me a fresh word. I was afraid lest he should not, but he did; and the word was, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Oh, was not that nice! How I did *tune* to the Lord! Then again it said, "Truly the Lord is good to Israel," and it did not go on; but it just said, "Truly," &c.; oh, how that word came, "Truly!"'

1849. *Jan.* 2, *Tuesday. Hitchin.* I arrived here on Saturday evening. I had some intimation of my subject given me for the following morning from Psalm cxxxiii, and the more I thought of it the more it opened. So I took it, and read John xiii. These portions caused my spirit to kindle, and I believe the Lord bore witness to them in the hearts of several.

As soon as dinner was over I retired by myself to seek the Lord respecting my afternoon preaching, for a cloud had come over me; the whole word was darkened; as were also my prospects of help in administering the ordinance of baptism. I cried to the Lord, and a little before service time a gentle breathing led me to the concluding verses of Matthew's gospel, 'All power is given unto me,' &c., and I found in it all I wanted. I had truly left it with the Lord, and now he confirmed my hope fully. I preached with great enlargement of heart, and found again, as often before, that the sign of infant baptism became to me as the bow in the cloud, the token of the covenant. Both the grandfather and father of the child were encouraged, and felt the power of the Lord; and many expressed the same.

Feb. 24, *Saturday.* On Thursday night and yesterday morning I read John Hill's five sermons on the words, 'Ye are come .... to God the Judge of all,' &c., Heb. xii. 22, 23. The second contains that very beautiful passage on Christ's imputed righteousness which

has so much comforted Mr. Bourne. I felt them deeply searching; the first mowed me down like grass: and all yesterday morning I was in a very tried and despairing state from a discernment of the little measure in which the saving work is inwrought. It seemed to root out my hopes, and throw a veil over all my encouragements as a minister. In the afternoon I walked out and cried. I found power to bring myself and all to Christ. I thought of the words, 'The apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things . . . ., and he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile.' I preached on the words with much enlargement. Lord, grant me thy searching presence. This enabled me to write faithfully to a friend.

Feb. 26. I went to see MRS. R., for she is very ill. Her spirit was like the firm rock, yet most tender. 'O Mr. Gilpin, when I saw you last I was much tried, but soon afterwards the comfort came, and these words entered very gently, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Since then one of our hymns has been so beautiful to me,

> "Trust him; he will not deceive us,
> Though we hardly of him deem:
> He will never, never leave us;
> Nor will let us quite leave him."

Except I get help soon, I must put off my tabernacle, but what a glorious change it will be! No more sorrow! no more tears for ever! How can I praise the Lord enough. I can praise him a little. To think he should have made it quite clear that he blotted out all my sins, every one of them! yet how great have been my sins since that day. But he changes not. I know, to my sorrow, I change often; but he changes not: therefore I shall be saved. Oh, bright! bright! If now my end come, I can say no less. I am sure, quite sure of the truth of what I say. I took the book, though I can scarce read a word, and the little I saw went to my heart.' Then finding Eph. i, she pointed to verses 12 and 14, asking me to read them. 'That was it, Mr. Gilpin, that was it,—"first trusted in Christ." How nice that was! for I had trusted in Christ—I knew it. "I know whom I have believed." I do, I do. Bless the Lord, O my soul.'

March 5. I went to see ——. I fear there is spiritual lightness, there is no ear for reproof, therefore every admonition gets blunted. When I mused on these things I felt tried. A desire not to condemn others, but to be humbled before the Lord who suffers my word, though not his own, to return void. Surely this ear not opened to discipline is a great curse. It pleased God to enable me to feel a measure of the tender refuge in Christ with which I had been visited in the morning.

April. I visited the HASTINGS, and found the poor man [greatly afflicted] had been taken worse, and was in bed. Mr. W. Maydwell was with me. We went up, and were much impressed with his conversation. He said:—

'How afraid I am of one murmuring thought, for it is quarrelling

with God. I dare not murmur at his dispensations. Sometimes I feel very dull, and can think of nothing encouraging; but at other times a word enters, and then I can turn my mind to the scriptures and find them full of comfort. How sweet some of them, which I remember at different times have comforted me, have been this evening, especially one in Solomon's Song, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." And this one, "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." I account the Lord's dispensation to be this *chain*, and I am bound with it for the hope of Israel. For I can truly say before my troubles I found nothing of the blessedness I feel now.' There was such a pure simplicity in his words and spirit that it exceedingly comforted me.

April 4, *Wednesday*. Yesterday morning I went in great heaviness to Hitchin, where I wandered up and down by the Gaping hills, and cried. Hope was borne down, things were clouded, there seemed a threatening aspect, and a withering gloom about me; but as I continued revolving Isaiah lxiv, especially this part, 'In those (ways) is continuance,' I began to feel a little liberty. Afterwards the spirit of my friend Mr. L. sweetly set forth the fear of the Lord, and I was unbound. I went to the chapel, and preached from the above chapter, verses 5–7. I believe, all unworthy as I am, that a greater than I was present, and confirmed the word. How can I account for the change I felt, from being a fading leaf to become the Lord's messenger! Lord, let no vain hope of this make me presume, nor any press of unbelief cause me to deny, that it was thy will I should stand in thy favour and say, 'Thou art working salvation in the midst of the earth.' The savour of it rests upon me to-day.

June 21, *Thursday*. Tuesday morning I was very low, and though I prayed with some stedfastness during my journey to Hitchin, I continued bound in spirit. In the afternoon I described my feelings to my dear friend, who in return described his own; the storm of temptation he had passed through under my previous discourse, which had excited all the evils within; and this effect from the preached word was new to him. He had spent a sleepless night; but the next evening the Lord broke in, and all the temptations were clean removed. The gentle power on his spirit was indeed refreshing. I had found a little opening of the last verses of Luke ix, and being afraid of choosing for myself where I could hope the Lord had chosen for me, I preached from them, though at the time of my beginning all seemed shut up, yet I felt a stedfast hope through all my darkness that the Lord opened my mouth, and my heart became enlarged. I thought also, Will not the Lord thus prepare ministers for their work? After service my friend told me he had greatly enjoyed it.

That night a part of the words, which first visited me in the month of August 1836, rekindled upon my heart: 'Cast thy bread upon the

waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.' 'Lord,' I said, 'are not many days fulfilled? now let me find the bread. It is for my own starving soul I need the bread.' I am writing this after the power is quenched in clouds of unbelief, but oh! how precious it was to believe that the Lord's constant, unchangeable word, enduring for ever, reviving again, is with me; and this upholds me.

June 24, Sunday. This morning I was tried, but most of all between the services. I laboured hard for help in anticipation of this evening's preaching, which is often the case when I find afterwards I have neglected a certain still small voice. By the mercy of God I was brought back to it; and when I entered the pulpit, I determined in the Lord's name to preach from a word which had breathed through my soul in my distress this morning, 'How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger,' &c. (Lam. ii. 1). It unfolded sweetly, disclosing judgment and mercy; and I believe my own soul was fed, and I trust the souls of some of my hearers.

After service, hearing that a poor man who lived at the Old Cross was dying, I went to see him, and am glad I did. I have often felt his case to be one I must leave alone,—that it might be good, but I could not see whether it was good or not, as from deafness, inarticulate speech, and confusion of intellect, he seemed unapproachable. But I found him in a tender, subdued state of joy and thankfulness, stammering out words like these, 'I am happy, oh, the goodness of God to me in my old age! I hope he will take me! I hope my foundation is right!' His daughter said he kept saying, 'Me, a guilty sinner, and Christ who was innocent died for me! Why should I think of the trouble, what signifies my trouble!' She told me ever since he had become bedridden, six months ago, she had noticed this change. I think I never saw a stronger expression of mortal agony than was on his countenance. When I considered his condition, and that I might hope he had found the Lord, I was amazed at the goodness of God: and since I left him I have found an abounding of thankfulness in the hope that he is indeed a sinner saved.

June 25. Supposing that he must certainly be no more, I did not go to enquire very early, but when I did so was surprized to hear he was better. I therefore went in to see him, and though his extreme deafness almost hinders all conversation, I learnt enough from him to believe that in very deed the Lord Jesus Christ has had mercy upon him. His expressions as he lay upon his bed were all consistent, clear, and tender, such as these, 'Oh, blessed day that ever the Lord should have shown me what he has! I am a poor ignorant man, but the Lord has taught me;—there's a great difference between ignorance and knowledge.' I said, 'You used not to be happy when I knew you formerly, why was that?' 'Because, sir, I was on the wrong foundation.' 'And what is your foundation now?' 'Christ the Lord, the precious dear Saviour, who died for such a wicked sinner: this the Lord showed me! oh, to think of his lovingkindness to me in my old age, making me so gloriously happy!' I said, 'Then Jesus took away all your sin?' He said, 'Why, sir, I'm a

sinner still.' 'You mean,' I replied, 'you feel sin rise fresh and fresh.' 'Aye, I do; there's great temptation in the world.' 'Then you cry, and Jesus takes the sin away?' 'Yes, sir, but I have to fight hard; I cannot go on without fighting.' Much more he said in the utmost simplicity and power.

This poor man was very ill brought up, and extremely ignorant. Many years ago he fell with his head under a cart wheel; his jaws were broken, the roof of his mouth partly destroyed, the hearing of one ear entirely lost, and the brain in a measure disordered. Formerly if you attempted to speak with him he seemed almost wild with grief, but in an incoherent manner would say some good things, and then all seemed quenched in worldly sorrow. Soon after the death of his wife he became bedridden, and then the Lord without any outward instrument wrought this blessed and holy work in his heart. I think I never knew a more remarkable case of the kind.

CHAPTER XII.

1849, 1850. Further ministerial trials and comfort—Mrs. Marshall—God's furnace in Zion, and the relation of all the scattered churches—Visits to his people—Some account of the last few months of Mrs. T. Malin—Pleading Christ—Visit to Mrs. R.—Decline at Hitchin.

Dec. 5. Having previously been much depressed because of our low condition at Hitchin, I preached from John xvii. 1–3, and found much liberty. The hearers were very few indeed, but I received help from considering the Lord Jesus with his eleven, and they about to be scattered every one to his own; when instead of looking down he looked up to heaven, and said, 'Father . . . glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.' I desire to speak with reverence as wholly unworthy of such a blessing, but I thought the Lord acknowledged me, viewed me in his Son, and as a son, and I said, 'Father, glorify me by thy grace to endure thy whole will, and wait with all patience; and then by enduring I shall glorify thee.' This was more sweet still in the course of the night, so that I lost all my despondency about the fewness of the people. The Lord confirm this mercy.

Dec. 19. Last Sunday I found a comfortable change in the pulpit, having been exercised with a feeling sense of the utmost barrenness. My text was, 'Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him,' &c. I thought, as I entered the pulpit, I have not one word to say; but my heart looked up to the Lord, and matter, method, and all, flowed in to the end. I thought I was enabled to pour water out of an empty bucket.

1850. *Jan.* 7. Mr. Spence drove me over to Standon, and another member of our church followed. Our object was to unite as member old Mrs. Marshall, by taking the Communion with her. It was a truly blessed time. We saw in her an example of the spiritually broken heart, healed by repeated tokens of Jesus Christ's sure mercy; yet so that the healing seemed to her too good to be true, and led to a renewed conflict. 'What can you see in me to make you hope well of me, a poor wretched sinner? Oh, what a mercy it is that I am out of hell!' When I reminded her of some of the Lord's clear tokens of mercy, she acknowledged them herself, and repeated many with great fervour, especially that one when the Lord said to her, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' At times the discovery and deep feeling of her sin almost overpowered her. She had been tried with a temptation that she was only a hypocrite, and added, 'I fear I am one too, do not you?' I said, 'No; because the Lord has given you such a tender fear of it yourself; and that is his mercy to you.' She replied, 'I cannot speak much to you, but I can say, "Amen, Amen."' It is true that the bitter distress of my heart for my sins is sometimes more than I can bear.' At last it appeared that the Lord had confirmed her faith in Jesus, as 'all in all' to her. After the Ordinance we let her talk by herself, and, as Mr. Spence and I observed, it was like listening to the nightingale's under notes. The love she showed was truly affecting. I thought indeed the Lord approved of the step we had taken: and she said, 'Now the Lord has comforted me.'

Jan. 29, *Tuesday.* The Lord, I believe, helped my infirmity twice on Sunday to preach from these words, 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Tim. iii. 15). I never before felt such an understanding in the relation of all the little scattered churches of Christ, wherever two or three meet really in his name, with the holy church universal. How a real feeling of this sobers and meekens our hearts, and makes us willing to endure all things!

Feb. 16, *Saturday.* Yesterday I visited many of the people. I felt the truth of what I doubt not is always the case in every living church. It seemed to me wherever I went I found so many little furnaces, and the precious ones burning in them. I told one of these that though I did not know the depth of her trial, yet Jesus Christ did, and it was finding him with her which would cause her to glory in tribulation. All these things made me wish to preach from Dan. xi. 33–35, which I found very instructive.

June 8. I have found some help, especially in visiting the flock. Before I went out, and while walking by myself, oppression and fear enfeebled me to the utmost. In this state I first went to Mrs. Pallett, and she gave me so sweet an account of the breaking of her temptations, that I began to think, Perhaps the Lord will break mine. Then I visited Miss Catharine Taylor, and she gave me such a hopeful account of an aged relative, who now, after all her backsliding, is seeking the Lord with a broken heart, that

again I was cheered. Then I went to Nurse Galer, and found her in deep soul trouble, but she had found comfort from the words, 'a new and living way.' I read the passage carefully with her, and she was more moved than I ever saw her before. Then I spoke to another who was greatly cast down, and she told me tenderly how, when her troubles and mortifications hemmed her in on every side, she had fallen down and cried for resignation, and, for a short time, had been filled with the sweetest and most humbling love. Lastly, I went to take leave of that dying saint, Mrs. T. Malin, who was only able to say in a whisper, 'Love shall still remain.' I sensibly felt that in all these visits the Lord was merciful to me, and I would fain say, 'Why art thou discouraged, O my soul?'

June 10, *Monday*. After my reviving on Saturday, I felt a steady desire to preach from Heb. x. 19–23. I did so twice, but in the morning could not get beyond the 19th verse, I found such fulness in this word, 'boldness;' and again in this, 'holiest.' I saw what a divine boldness was required to press into the holiest, where we are consumed as undone, except Christ's blood come in. I thought of Isaiah in his 6th chapter. It was stirring and profitable to me, and between the services I was refreshed in prayer.

June 17, *Monday*. In the evening of yesterday I sought for a subject which might be suitable for the family, as Lucy Malin had slowly breathed her last on Saturday evening. Her end was serene indeed. The last time I had seen her she had testified in her great weakness that she was still happy:—'Not,' she added, 'without a conflict, but the Lord still comes in, and gives me the victory.' Oh, what a tried life and blessed death has hers been! All her friends and her husband were at chapel; and I preached from the words, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'

Some account of the last few months of Mrs. Thomas Malin.

In the autumn of 1849 she was seized with a severe illness, during which her state of mind was most blessed. The Lord poured in the oil and wine of his grace abundantly, and revived in her soul all the tokens of his favours, and the work of grace which he had wrought in her during past years. This word was made to shine in an especial manner, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' One day this promise entered very sweetly, 'O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.' It seemed almost to dissolve her frame in wonder at the Lord's great condescension, when this further word followed and completed her joy, 'Their iniquities will I remember no more.' The contrast between herself remembered and her sin forgotten, almost overpowered her for a time.

In Feb. 1850 she was seized with the illness which proved to be her last. She had not such spiritual joy as before, but great trial and conflict of soul. She was left for a time to feel the hidden evils of her heart. Her severe afflictions in body and circumstances excited for a while many rebellious thoughts, so that she could enter into the painful experience of the writer of the 73rd Psalm, 'I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.' The recollection of some careless, indifferent characters among those she knew, strengthened this temptation for a time. How strong and healthy they are! (thought she.) How worn with sickness and pain am I! How their plans prosper! How mine are all blasted! In one moment the Lord appeared in his grace, and broke her heart to pieces by the power of this word, '*And all to give thee* an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.' The most tender contrition, self-abhorrence, and praise immediately flowed in; and the 73rd Psalm appeared to her as the finest gold.

The Lord was now about to take her to himself, and prepared her for her last change by enabling her, in a blessed manner, to humble herself as a sinner, and exalt him as her Saviour.

I will describe the manner in which these blessings were wrought, by blending together the accounts preserved by two of her friends of her conversations with them.

I called to see her on May 10, and was shocked to notice the change which had taken place in her health since my previous interview; yet the quiet serenity of her countenance at once bespoke the peace and happiness which filled her whole soul. She briefly told me about her bodily sufferings, and then said, 'But the Lord is very good to me, and has been a very present help, strengthening and reviving me from time to time. He has never left me, though at times I have left him. But last week he visited my soul in so confirming a way that, although I have in a measure lost the power and glory of it, the remembrance of it still strengthens and supports me.' I begged her to give me an account of this, which she did as follows.

'A fortnight ago, being then better than I am now, I was removed from my mother's house, and, much to my satisfaction, came to my own. I was glad to be here again on my husband's account, and to have him with me; and I began to feel such a clinging to life as I cannot tell you. I thought if I could but get well again, and enjoy my husband and my home, how happy I should be. In this state I went on all the week, wrapped up in the things of this world, clinging to life, and longing for health and strength. But on Saturday I was arrested with these words, "The strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them." Oh, the conviction and fear with which these words entered my heart! But I said, "Lord, thou surely art my God; thou dost not intend this for final destruction." Nevertheless the fear increased, and such darkness came over me as it is not possible for me to express. I could see nothing, I could feel nothing, but my sin. Everything that the Lord had ever done for me was thickly clouded over. Oh, it was darkness indeed! oh, the terrible fear too that I felt! I said, "Surely the Lord does intend this for final destruction! Surely he has forsaken me, and cast me off for

ever! He will leave me at last to perish!" I felt no power at all to look to him, or to cry; all was shut up: and thus I continued till Monday morning, when I found a little power to cry to the Lord that he would help me; but it was so feeble it did not seem like prayer. However, in a short time the Lord broke in upon my soul in these words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Oh, the beauty and glory of it! the joy and peace which it brought into my soul I cannot describe. Every word seemed so full, and large. It was the voice of Jesus, the words of Jesus, testifying of the good will and good pleasure of the Father, and applied by the Spirit to *me*. I saw in them the three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saying, "Fear not," to me who was so full of fears. "Fear not, little flock;" little ones, little in faith, little in grace, weak as myself. I knew that he was my Shepherd, that I was his sheep, for whom he had laid down his life; that I should never perish, and that no one should ever take me out of his hand. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." My Father's good pleasure to give ME the kingdom: not for anything in me, but of his own good pleasure. Oh, the beauty, the glory, and fulness of it! I had no desire left but for Jesus; every earthly desire was quite burnt up; and then I knew the meaning of those words, which had brought such trouble, conviction, and fear into my heart before, "The strong shall be as tow," &c. I felt, indeed, that they were not for final destruction, but to purge away the dross, and make me more like Jesus. I longed to be gone, to see him as he is. I could give up my husband and everything else then. I could say from my very heart, "Thy will be done." The beauty and the glory of this full assurance of faith, took away all fear of death, and all wish for life. And though now I have lost the great power I felt at first, still whenever the fear of death returns, I flee to Jesus, and plead these same words; and in this way I find the help and comfort restored again.'

After this, for the most part, her state seemed a truly happy one, though the oppression of pain and disease almost overpowered her. She had, however, one more short but very severe conflict, which completed the precious trial of her faith. It began by the entrance of this word, 'After two days I will revive you: in the third day I will raise you up.' (See Hos. vi. 2.) She anxiously watched (as, through grace, had been her practice for years) that she might discover the Lord's full meaning in the word as thus applied to her. Then was her hope purified as in a furnace of earth, for she was awed to the uttermost with this thought, 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' The next day a little help began to flow in, and on the following day she found a return of the sweetest possible assurance of the Lord's unchangeable mercy. She was becoming too weak to describe all she felt fully, but her words betokened the most serene peace. 'I have fought a good fight,' she said, 'I have finished my course, I have kept the faith! Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing!' Oftentimes also she repeated this promise, 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' When she saw me after this,

though scarcely able to speak, she said, 'Love shall still remain;' and so indeed it did to the last. She longed to be gone, but was fearful of offending the Lord by impatience. Once she waked up in holy triumph, 'Clothed,' she exclaimed, 'in the white robes of Christ's righteousness! and palms in their hands.' By reason of her extreme weakness her words became few and short, but often she said, 'I am happy;' and once added to me, 'Not that I am without conflicts, but the Lord overcomes for me.' In this state of mind, worn out with disease, but rejoicing in spirit, she gradually sank lower and lower, and sweetly slept in Jesus, June 15, 1850, aged 27 years.

July 16. On Sunday I found help in preaching from Matt. v. 1–12. This part appeared encouraging to me,—the Lord's blessing on all these fruits of his Spirit: and where that blessing is, these effects follow. The path of sanctified tribulation, Psa. xciv. 12. The path of trust, Jer. xvii. 7. The forgiveness of sins, Psa. xxxii. 1.

I have had some very comforting visits with several, whose hearts seem searched, and abounding in faith; but I cannot describe the great sinking and fear which return upon me. To-day I feel 'pressed out of measure.' I dare plead nothing but Christ. Though I am ignorant, he had knowledge. Let his knowledge justify me. Though I am without the feeling of love or any other grace now, and can only say I sink! I sink! and cry with a stifled voice, Lord, save! yet Christ was holy, and sinned not. Let his holiness be my righteousness, that thy Spirit through him may condescend to come unto me. Let thy church in Hertford live for his sake, not mine. Let thy scattered sheep in Hitchin be gathered for his sake, not mine. Lord help me this day.

July 18. After I had written the above I went to Hitchin. A little help sprang in from the words written in Mark x. 32, 'Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid.' It led me to preach with much comfort from the words; but my feelings for the state of the little cause there were very desolate.

July 20. I wish I could retain the unction of MRS. R.'s words to-day:—

'I am comfortable, Mr. Gilpin, though tried in my health. Several weeks ago the words came to me, "My Lord and my God;" but in the state I was I said, "Lord, may I say such words?" For several days my lowness has increased. I always am greatly afraid whenever the darkness covers me. I fear the Lord is offended, and will not return. Oh, what a condition I was in, till yesterday morning the Lord said to me, "Let there be no despairing, I am thy God!" How it brought me down into the very dust! This morning I lighted on these words, "Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold it is I." I said, "Lord, I do know it;" and I could not thank him as I wished. It was too much for me. The first time I had ever been able to say, "Thou art my God," was in your

chapel years ago. How the Lord had brought me down before that time! What a deep feeling I had of my sin! A man may know he is a sinner, but not feel it cut so deep as I did except the Lord does it. For such a one to believe that Christ will receive him, is indeed wonderful.'

Aug. 10, *Saturday.* The exercise of my mind throughout this week was intense. It was clouds and darkness and sorrow. I had such a keen and painful sense of being left alone by the Lord, and many of the people at Hitchin withdrawn in spirit from me. In this frame I returned from thence on Thursday, and had a desolate day; but yesterday morning, thank the Lord, he returned in a measure, and I found myself encompassed with many chapters unsought which all spoke to me one way, and strengthened me to press on, Isa. li, Dan. ix and x, 2 Cor. iv and vi, especially this, 'Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.' I thought the dying state of his living members was part of this burden. The change made me feel myself the Lord's servant again. It refreshed me at night in preaching in my own pulpit from James v. 11.

CHAPTER XIII.

1851. Strengthened by the word—God's favour and defence—Helped in prayer—Reflections after three years' ministry at Hitchin—Account of Mrs. Isitt.

March 9. [After the recurrence of further trials, both inward and connected with the declining cause at Hitchin, Mr. Gilpin writes:—] The words became very precious, 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' And I said, 'Surely, O Lord, thou didst look upon me, a carnal easy professor intending only to go in the imagination of my own heart, and didst fix an arrow in me which wrought by degrees till it brought me for the sake of thy truth, and in the fear of thy name, to give up my worldly interests, and set me in the path of tribulation, wherein I have continued ever since. I made no plan, I only cried to thee that I might follow thy direction in all things, and thou hast established my ministry and given me souls for my hire. O Lord, let not these beginnings in the Spirit end in the flesh. Uphold and direct me still; work in me more effectually. I am still an ignorant, dependant, sinful, and unworthy worm. All the good I hope I see in myself is thine only; all my own part is evil; which I see more clearly than ever. But now thy word strengthens me, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost. It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."'

April 10, *Thursday*. On Sunday I was very much tried in the morning because of two members whose state of heart seems too evidently bad to satisfy me that they should continue, though I know not how to remove them. It brought a very deep cry for mercy. In the evening I preached from words in their connection very awful, yet they had entered my heart with encouragement: 'Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank?' (Luke xix. 23.) I saw and knew what this was,—the continual turning in heart with all burdens, all gifts, all graces, to Jesus Christ; and I cannot but acknowledge with thankfulness that I know something of it. One told me afterwards that this brought him out of great temptations, and made him truly happy in the Lord.

On my way to Ware I had a season of more peace, faith, and affiance in the Lord than I have had for long. His defence and his direction and favour too were strong in my heart. In this light my ministry was felt to be of the Lord indeed, which gave me a gentle firmness, for which I was very grateful and joyful.

July 19, *Saturday*. On Thursday I went to Hitchin. Going down to Hertford, the day being hot, and being also hurried, I just said, (I know not why,) 'How easily the Lord could send a conveyance to help me; but if not, it does not in the least signify, let me beguile the time by meditation.' A singular hope ensued that one was approaching. The instant afterwards I heard wheels, and Mr. L. of Sacombe drew up his carriage. He stopped and begged me to sit with him. I do not remember having spoken to him for seven years before. This little circumstance, in itself nothing, appeared to me a kind intimation from the Lord that he was waiting to hear my prayer, and it encouraged me in praying all day afterwards. In the evening I was greatly enlarged in preaching from Hosea iv. 16.

I had brought Mr. Nunn's letters, just published, from London, and read them as I returned home. They arrested my whole heart, and kindled fear, hope, and love in me. They searched me, and renewed my affection for that good man.

July 24. *Hitchin*. It is three years since my ministry here began. I thank God I can say, 'Ebenezer;' though I have been, as respects men, a despised broken vessel here all the time. I believe the Lord's hand is with me. I preached from these words, 'But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,' &c. (2 Pet. iii. 8, 9). I felt a hope that all the trial I have passed through, through the contempt and neglect of all except two or three, has been because the Lord is long-suffering towards me; for he sees I am very bad, yet he does not cast me away. It was sweet to me, and so it was to the little remnant.

[After these quotations, descriptive of the exercise and trial connected with the cause at Hitchin, it will be an acceptable change

to turn to one instance of that *life* which again and again refreshed his soul in communion with the few in that place who cleaved to him in love.]

Account of Mrs. Isitt.

I have felt the case of the late Mrs. Isitt to be a very impressive and instructive one. From an early period of my acquaintance with her, I felt convinced that she was one quickened by the grace of God. I found it no easy matter for myself to 'come to the light' of her searching and simple conversation, which spoke aloud to every one that approached her, 'Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord.' I used often to fear lest my own hope should be, as I may say, consumed by the brightness with which the reproving word shone. She only related to me her own deep searchings of heart, but the Lord brought them to me also: 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?' The effect of this, however, was to draw me the way she was going; if possible to be nothing, that Christ might be all; and I often left her sick room strengthened, and not weakened.

Martha Isitt was a person of superior natural understanding, and though without the advantages of education, was able to read and enter into the treatises of such writers as Luther and Owen. She was always ready, from tender consciousness of sin, to make the most of all that seemed against her, and slow to admit what plainly appeared in her favour. The predominant grace she was enabled to manifest was a spirit of love to the brethren; and she would sometimes, if pressed, acknowledge that a secret feeling of it in her heart, such as many waters could not quench, nor the floods drown, gave her no small support according to this word, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.'

It is a satisfaction in such a case to be permitted, (with reverence still to the unsearchable depths of the judgments and wisdom of God,) to give a reason of so trying and peculiar a lot, as hers was to the very end of her days. She had herself heard the word in an awful crisis of her life, 'The sword shall never depart from thy house.' For not many years after her marriage, and after she had begun to attain to the knowledge and love of the truth, she was guilty of no less a transgression than the direct breach of the seventh commandment. Excess of vanity and a worldly spirit hurried her on to this great sin; and she used bitterly to bewail a certain audacity in her spirit at the time, which led her to say inwardly, 'Never mind, I shall find forgiveness: it will only cost me a few more conflicts before I die.' So she fell, and her just and holy Father took vengeance of her inventions (Psalm xcix. 8). From all love of the sin, from all excusing herself because of it, from all traces of it in her spirit and conversation, she was clearly delivered for years before her death. Yet, if we do not bring into account God's righteous retribution of her past sin, many might say, and did say, 'How is it, if her labour be indeed in the Lord, that she never fully attains to "lie down in green pastures," and to be led "beside the still waters?"'

For my own part I believe that the mercy and grace of Christ were truly conspicuous in her case. Though some spoke with hesitation and doubt respecting her, I never could join them; and though I waited for

three weeks after her death, before I spoke of her in my ministry, I was afterwards fully assured in mind that I must return to magnify this work of God (Job xxxvi. 24). I preached her funeral sermon from words which I thought were descriptive of her case, Psalm ix. 13, 14. For from the time I first knew her till her death, this had been almost her daily experience, 'Thou liftest me up from the gates of death.' I was convinced that in very deed, in a neglected corner of Hitchin, a town abounding above many in light professors, one of the least known but not the least brave of the warriors of the Lamb, for several years together, had continued day and night to fight the good fight of faith, till her hand clave to the sword; and after all her fears lest she should sink in despair, had died with the quiet and modest assurance upon her lips, that the battle was won, and the peace of God was found.

The case was no common one; the warning it gives on the one hand, and the encouragement it holds out on the other, are worthy of our most serious attention. May the Lord enable us to follow her, not indeed in her fall, but in her rising again; not in the painful misgivings of her unbelieving fears, but in the effectual victory of that conflicting faith which was evidently wrought in her regenerated nature.

The sincerity of her grief and her earnestness for pardon were such, that her sister Rachel used to express great hope that the Lord had put away her sin; and being herself greatly stirred up by the awakening warning tenor of Mrs. Isitt's conversation, she likewise became the subject of an undoubted work of grace, and after a severe conflict, died in the enjoyment of the peace and love of God. Her death left Mrs. Isitt in much desolation. She would often say, 'One has been taken, and I fear the other will be left.' She did her utmost to maintain herself by needle-work; but had it not been for the kindness of a few friends, her state would often have been destitute in the extreme. She gradually sunk into a very lingering decline, subject at times to a hemorrhage from the lungs.

In the spring of 1847 I first visited her; and during the last fifteen months of her tried course, generally conversed with her for a short time on my weekly return to Hitchin. I never knew an individual in whom there appeared more fixedly what she was accustomed to call 'faith in the justice of God.' 'Faith,' she would say, 'has so much more to believe than the mercy of God only. I know that I have deserved destruction; I know also that there is mercy with him; so far I have attained.' Beyond this she would at times acknowledge a season of softening, a sense of favour, a gospel gleam of a few minutes duration, a most suitable and encouraging word of promise which had been as manna from heaven, till the roaring lion had been permitted to snatch it away from her. These transient yet effectual applications of the word were always noted by me as perfectly consistent one with another, and gradually pointing towards her deliverance. It happened also, as I had expected and prayed for years, that this barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail. Though every drop seemed gone, still when she went again a little was left for her refreshment.

Some notices of her conversations.

Sept. 17, 1848. She said, 'I had almost entered into temptation when these words arrested me like lightning, "Keep back thy servant also from

presumptuous sins," and I was preserved from falling. I feel a hope from this, that I am guarded by the Lord.'

About a month afterwards her illness suddenly increased, which always excited fears lest her death also should prove sudden. But her fears were arrested by the entrance of this word, 'That day shall not come upon you as a thief.'

About the beginning of 1849 she was on one occasion brought exceedingly low, when these words revived her by coming three times over to answer all her doubts, 'Him that cometh to me I will IN NO WISE cast out.' She was not yet quite unable to attend my evening preaching, and the next day was much revived by the hope which sprung up in her heart as I spoke thus, 'If you have not the faith I have just described, ask for it.' As soon as she began to enjoy this hope, it was fiercely disputed in her heart; but she was enabled to hold it fast, and to say, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, for I shall rejoice, I surely shall!'

May 29. She told me that suspecting that one whom she looked up to did not feel much hope for her, she had felt cut down as by a scythe; and the taunting words filled her heart, 'You are certainly wrong, and always will be; make up your mind to be lost; weep for a thousand years it will do you no good.' This wrought dreadful hardness of heart, perceiving which she uttered the prayer, 'Lord, if this trial come from thee, let me bear it; if from Satan, let me resist it.' Then the word followed, softening and unbinding her heart, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

In the course of the following autumn she complained of the return of the most heart-searching fears, and that she saw the gulf of destruction before her, with a keen sense that she deserved to be left to perish, all this time the enemy fiercely accusing her. Hope in Christ's mercy and many encouraging words came mingling in with these fears; but especially once while she was crying and saying, 'Lord, I have sinned myself to the uttermost distance from thee,' this followed, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' About the same time she had been endeavouring to read Heb. x, but found part of it ('If we sin wilfully,' &c.) so terrible she could not proceed. This she confessed to the Lord, and the word came, 'To this man will I look, even to him that .... trembleth at my word.' This was one of those seasons when it seemed impossible for any spiritual person, witnessing the depth and reality of her conflict, to have doubted of her soul's safety; yet she could scarcely feel a grain of hope for herself.

About a fortnight after this she enjoyed a sweet day of hope. 'The Lord,' she said, 'no longer appeared angry, but reconciled. I prayed to love him; and did love his image in his people, so as to be praying for others all day. A kind friend came in and conversed with me, to whom I told all my feelings, but inwardly felt afraid of my comfort, because I had not been made clear by the full assurance of faith. My friend warned me not to refuse the comfort, lest I should limit the Lord, and added, "Do you want your gloomy terrors back again?" As soon as I was left alone I felt the need of this caution; for suddenly my hope gave way, and all my fears returned. Then I felt that my legal spirit was a great sin. I cried, Lord, have mercy! and he stayed me, and made me wait in prayer and patience. Soon afterwards again my heart

sunk, when I was arrested by a blessed word which seems to me clearer than any past help I can look back upon, "Call upon me in the day of trouble."'

Formerly the legality of her spirit had been shown by her rejecting comfort, not only because it was not clear enough, but because she supposed the trouble would do her more good. But before this period the veil had been taken away; and she ever afterwards regarded such reasonings as a sinful disparagement of Christ. Though this discovery did not abate her trouble, it certainly made it profitable. After being assaulted by fiery darts of infidelity and blasphemy all day, she kept saying in the utmost weakness, 'Lord, save or I perish;' and her sinking spirit was revived by the consideration, This is taking hold of the shield of faith.

Early in Dec. 1849 she told me that shortly before she had spent an unusually happy day. For whilst she had been seeking the Lord's mercy, and saying, 'Lord, thou knowest it is thy mercy I long for,' these words came to her mind with confirming power, 'He satisfieth the longing soul;' then this followed, 'Surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.' She then hoped a blessed time was at hand; instead of which the temptations quickly broke in afresh, and were hardly stayed by the power of this word, 'Many waters cannot quench love.'

About a fortnight afterwards she had sunk, she said, lower than ever; when these words became very sweet to her, 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost.' She begged to hear the 6th of Hebrews, because these words in it, 'Fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us,' had been especially encouraging to her. The former part of it (being similar in character to that part of the 10th chapter, which she had not been able on a late occasion to read) had often terrified her. This day, however, she said, 'It does not terrify me now: I see so clearly I am not the person condemned by it. Read me the words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," &c.' As the chapter proceeded she said, 'Oh, what music to my soul!' When this part came, 'He that doeth truth cometh to the light,' she added, 'That part helps me now as well as the other, because for the last many months I have certainly been coming to the light.'

The last time I saw her in the year 1849 she told me she had also found part of Romans x, which had greatly encouraged her hope. Then said the enemy in her heart, 'If that 10th of Romans had seemed against you instead of for you, you would have shunned it. See, then, how dishonest you are.' However, she was not so ignorant of his devices as to yield the point; and she begged me to read the chapter through to her, which I most gladly did. When I reached these words, 'Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?' &c., I said, 'Let us beware, as this passage warns us, of a legal spirit: for although the Lord will lead his people up and down too in the conflict of faith, they must not think that this conflict fits them for Christ, but rather they must find Christ to enable them to endure it, and profit by it.' Here the truth evidently flashed upon her, and she said, 'Well, but how easy faith is then after all! and what a long way have I been about!' I could not help showing pleasure at hearing her thus speak; and she appeared well

pleased also; but immediately afterwards she began to pray with fear and trembling, 'O let me be searched and tried, not flattered!' Nevertheless I believe that then, and often in her conflicts, Christ stood behind the wall, and showed himself through the lattice (Song ii. 9).

After another attack of illness she gave me the following account. 'When the bleeding first came on I fell, as usual, to the very borders of despair; but getting better, and being obliged to keep very quiet, a great deadness of soul came on, which made me fear my state was bad indeed. I put up many broken prayers for help; and at last this word entered, "Who is among you . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." I began to reason all comfort away as I used formerly, and looking back on my fearful sins, said, I cannot call him MY GOD. Then the words followed, "Look not behind you: escape for your life: flee to the city of Refuge." This I saw to be Christ, and I was raised to hope and life again. Still I kept on mourning, and saying, The words are not a full deliverance; I am come to the latter end of my days, and am still dark in my soul; and at the moment I was saying so, my eye fell unexpectedly upon Deut. iv. 30, "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days ——." I could get no further. It was a word in season indeed. Never but once had I felt anything like it: that once was in this word, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost." I may say I had then, though not a full deliverance, yet such a stedfast faith in Christ's mercy, such a sense of its enduring for ever, such a hope that it is upon me, as I never before enjoyed. Oh! how I kept praying, Lord visit me as thou dost thine own people; and how I kept looking from all men to the Lord himself.'

About the middle of Feb. 1851 her state appeared remarkable. She had passed a distressing night, and said with very serious emphasis, 'I have been passing through the dark valley! and oh, it IS dark! But I have not been utterly left alone. Through all my weakness and torpor of body I have prayed, and have said, O Lord, I must continue to pray, and to entreat thee to show me mercy. If I die crying so, I must cry on. I have said, and I have felt what I said, The Lord is righteous. My millions of sins appear, and I say, Lord, thou art just if I am lost; but oh, thou art just also if I am saved, for thy word says, Thou wilt pardon those who believe! Those beautiful words in Rom. x, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," have been in my mind greatly comforting me; and so I feel them now. But sometimes it seems as if I had so much besides thy mercy to believe, that my heart sinks.'

Later in the same month she said, 'When I feel peace, the enemy—for I know his voice—says, "You ought to feel trouble:" but oh, the trouble will not save me! Lord Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, the full application of these is all I want. I prayed, O Lord, *strip me!* I found the stripping work very hard, but I was compelled to pray on, O Lord, strip me! Then I was obliged to make another prayer, O Lord, *clothe me!* clothe me with thy righteousness. I have a hope. It is different from what I used to feel. It is more like the power of this word, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Oh, my

sin ! I am all sin. But I am more brought down—I am willing to die a sinner, a sinner saved by grace. And, oh, it will be grace too, if I am saved !'

On a following occasion she acknowledged, as often before, that she believed she had life; but never having been brought to the full assurance of faith, was often afraid she was not 'born again.' So she said, and kept crying for a proof—a real proof—that she was born again. Soon afterwards she said, 'How I love his voice ! the Saviour's sweet voice, how I love the sound of it ! I know it.' I wished I could convince her that this divine discernment was the very proof she had cried for, that she was surely born again. But it was not in my power to satisfy her (John x. 5).

On the 11th of April she said, in her usual way, 'I cannot get the bar removed.' After a little conversation, and my reading the account of the thief on the cross, she began to gather light, 'Oh, there is a spring !—I do think there is a spring rising up in my heart. Oh, that adamant ! It begins to melt. How ashamed I am of my unbelief—ashamed of it, yet *cannot* get rid of it. But, oh, thank God, that he keeps me from having the hope of the hypocrite ! He says he hears the prayer that comes not out of feigned lips; and thank him my prayer was unfeigned. How I have cried from my heart, O Lord, strike me, refine me, put me in the furnace, heat it seven times, only save me. Oh, I have prayed so, and did not like the Lord's beginning to answer me, and yet I was obliged to go on with the same prayer ! Yet still the Lord hides his face; but he does not frown. He has not seemed angry all yesterday. I think Jesus smiles. I think I shall see him soon. But the enemy says, "It's all too late;" and he says the Lord will keep me back for years to punish me for my great sins. Now what a lie ! he would have me to believe my punishment is my Saviour. Oh, but it is Jesus, Jesus, and his blood ! to save the vilest, the very vilest. He is just if I am lost; he is merciful if he save me for his own glorious name's sake. Oh, that I could shout from the top of the rocks !' I cannot in the least convey all that her words showed. What a strength in weakness ! what a life in death ! what a hope in tribulation ! what a mortal battle of the flesh against the Spirit !

Somehow I expected at last that the victory was near; but when I visited her a week afterwards, I found her still as before, just lifted up from the gates of death, and with plenteousness of tears only to drink. I began to ponder with myself how it could be, and prayed that if anything were yet unsearched in her heart, the Lord would show it me, that the clearing might come at last. There was presented to my mind afterwards a certain want of tenderness in the manner in which I had sometimes heard her speak of one who had been unkind to her, but whom she had deeply injured. When I confessed to her my apprehension for her on this point, she entered into what I said with searching fear. The week following she told me that after I had left her, her casting down and, for a while, her displeasure had been extreme; but afterwards she felt thankful that I had spoken; and she had with all her heart been bringing that sad point to the Lord, that his light might shine upon it fully. Tender both in word and spirit she became, and seemed willing in every possible way to humble herself before God and man. It was impossible to withstand a peaceful persua-

sion that God had purified her heart by faith, which worketh by love. This drew her nearer to her friends in affection, but did not change the painful character of her spiritual conflicts.

On the 6th of June she told me she had been awaked with these words, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' At first it greatly encouraged her, till lighting on the following words about the plagues written in the book (Rev. xxii. 18) all her hope had been swept away, a flood of temptation rolled in, and she had spent a day of desperate fighting. Towards the end of my visit she said, 'But the words grew larger, indeed they grew larger, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come."'

Once I called on her and found her unusually peaceful. She said that shortly before, in the midst of her usual temptations and oppressions, the NAME OF JESUS became unutterably sweet to her, and she pleaded it ONLY. Then the words entered her heart, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' 'Oh,' she said, 'that name is the name of Jesus!' So she went on pleading it more and more; and hope came in, and all her terrors vanished, and for a short time her enemies were as still as a stone.

The last night of her life she felt much encouragement in soul, and sending again for a friend, said, 'I thought I should like to see you once more, and tell you that I don't give up! no, I don't give up!' Perceiving death to approach she asked to be raised up, and said slowly, three times over, 'Jesus receive my spirit!' Then she added, 'There remaineth a rest for the people of God.' Her friend said, 'Do you now feel that rest?' She replied, 'I do!' 'And how,' added the friend, 'do you feel those words now which lately came to you without giving you much hope, "According to your faith be it unto you?"' She said, 'They encourage me now. If it were of works I should have no hope, but it is of grace. He that believeth on him shall not be confounded.' Soon afterwards she added, 'I am departing;' and so she breathed out her spirit, as we may humbly believe, into the bosom of her Saviour. This was on the morning of Nov. 4, 1851, and in the 43rd year of her age.

CHAPTER XIV.

1851-1853. Mr. Burrell visits Hertford — Pastoral visits — Broken prayers — Second marriage — Account of Mr. Davies — Convictions of the Spirit, with the unloosing of his bonds — Later reflections on the closing of his ministry at Hitchin — Convictions through temptation, which work death unless resisted — Joshua's crowns — Searching — Comfort.

Sept. 3, *Wednesday.* On Monday morning Mr. and Mrs. Burrell came to Hertford. I was tried all day, and much cast down; but in the evening Mr. Burrell did give us such a sweet and tender account of the exercises and comforts of his soul that day in coming here, that I only wished I could set it down as a beautiful example

of the fine 'carved work' of the divine Spirit's teaching. This again raised me to hope, and yesterday and to-day I have felt refreshed under the word, at his morning readings and evening meetings. It also helped me in my ministry in paying many visits, especially one to J. S.; and I can truly hope, that though I went to him in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, yet the hand of the Lord was strong upon me. I was enabled very fully to testify that I fear indeed he has exceeded, and been ensnared in the late steps he has taken (without the sanction or advice of any of his spiritual friends) to push himself up in the world. I am sure that the strong testimony I bore against all his new plans must have been very trying to him. It was, however, encouraging to me to find in him the tokens of an open ear, and a trembling heart; so that my hope revived that the Lord would not suffer him to fall for ever*.

Sept. 19. I had a serious conversation with one of our poor members, and had investigated the foolish and malicious reports against him, and found them quite false. But I said to him, 'Shimei cursed David as Saul's murderer, which he was not; but never accused him of Uriah's murder, which he had actually committed. So, often, the Lord deals with us; the world abuses us for what we were never guilty of, but our consciences tell us some things which are wrong, done or allowed by us.' He confessed to me that he was in debt, and has remained so for several years, not increasing his debts, but (as appeared too plain to me) not exerting himself as he should do to get them reduced. I hope to be enabled to follow this up, that, by the Lord's blessing, he may become freed from the spiritual bondage which such a way of living brings a good man into.

1852. *Feb.* 3. This day twenty-three years ago I married my late dear wife. How I have been tossed about, and yet, as it were, kept still ever since. What reason I have to be thankful for the Lord's great mercy. Surely thou hast guided me, though I have not known thee.

I went out in a spirit of fervent prayer, and I hope the Lord was with me in my pastoral visits. First to one in temptation, and I endeavoured to pour oil upon her spirit. I then went to old Mrs. Boalter, who is very ill. How often have I seen her tossed upon the raging waves of temptation, and as if nothing could keep her;

* The subject to whom these remarks refer has been previously alluded to in the diary (see pp. 73–75). Through the power of temptation he was often carried away, causing much trouble and distress to himself for many years, and leading his brethren, in some cases, to entertain fears on his behalf. From time to time, however, the Lord seemed to appear in his favour, and to grant him godly sorrow and repentance; and there was ground to entertain a comfortable hope and belief that grace abundantly prevailed at last, and that the Lord heard and answered his many and earnest cries for deliverance from his spiritual enemies, according to these words, 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' His death took place shortly before the death of Mr. Gilpin, who had been led to treat his case with the greatest patience and forbearance.

and now, behold, she is by the still waters in her Saviour's arms, full of tenderness, thankfulness, and praise. Then I went to another; and there I found bitter temptation and prejudice; offence taken and given. I endeavoured to put the crooked straight, and going away felt a little of the Way through all,—a faith which keeps committing everything to Christ for ever.

Feb. 16. [Referring to some of the above trials, and to the danger in a church of yielding to such a spirit as some manifested, Mr. Gilpin writes,] Such are only poor victims, but the enemy puts forth his power to cause us to humble ourselves before him. Under this feeling, I prayed with broken prayers; and, just as I was going to rest, my eye fell unawares on these words, 'Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand,' &c. Then comes the answer, 'Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib' (Isa. xxxvii. 20, &c.) This helped me. The next morning I did not particularly advert to the passing trial; and after service all that I had felt the night before quite faded out, and left me void, as if I had nothing to say. I found this, as often hitherto, overruled for good. Just before evening service all kindled afresh. I preached from the words, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,' and read the chapter respecting Hezekiah's trial with Sennacherib. I perceived the Lord clothed the word with power, and had a sweet feeling afterwards that he had undertaken the cause. I can but add this has been a season wherein I have hitherto felt an overruling of matters from the Lord, and I desire to give glory to him for helping my infirmity.

May 4. On Sunday the 11th ult. I found help in my ministry, especially in preaching from these words, 'And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.' I felt encouraged to believe and pray that it may be thus indeed with my dear expected partner.

On the Monday morning I felt my way made plain before me, and went to Town, spending a pleasant hour or two with my sister, and then by N. E. Railway into Warwickshire. The next morning we were married. Going immediately afterwards into the drawing room with my wife alone, a letter was put into our hands. It contained a little Psalter from one of my sisters. I opened it on the 115th Psalm, and we read it together, 'Not unto us, O Lord,' &c. Soon afterwards we left for Reading, Tunbridge Wells, and Hastings. The Sunday following I went with my dear wife to Mr. Fenner's chapel at Hastings. The worship was conducted in the most reverent spirit, and much simplicity. We both loved it for the truth's sake. While in the chapel a love sprang up in my heart for the Lord's scattered sheep at Maresfield, Eastbourne, &c., who had so often invited me to preach amongst them, though I could not go when asked because of my charge at home. I thought they should not say, He has married a wife, and therefore he cannot come; so I

made arrangements with them, and preached twice at Eastbourne the next Sunday. Both times I enjoyed much liberty, and, as far as I could gather, the people also enjoyed the day; and one of them, a poor man named Richard Honnisett, came home and spent the day with us.

The next morning we had a splendid drive to Beachy Head, and then went to Lewes to see old Mr. Vinall. From Lewes we went to Reigate, and from thence on Tuesday through London to our new house at Bengeo. My dear children were well and cheerful, the friends all very kind, and an overruling hand had blessed their meetings since I left them.

[In the summer of this year Mr. Gilpin frequently visited, in his last illness, MR. DAVIES, solicitor, Hertford: some particulars of whose life and death, taken from his memoir, may here be inserted.]

MR. DAVIES was born in Hertford in the year 1804. From an early period of his life he manifested an unusual sensitiveness of mind, being often troubled at what usually troubles boys but little; and so much was he afraid of the judgments of God, that he has stated that while joining in the general thanksgiving in the Church of England service, 'We thank thee for our creation, preservation,' &c., he used regularly to omit the word 'creation,' fearing lest it should prove it had been better for him not to have been born.

Having completed his education as an attorney, he remained for a time in the office of the late Mr. Pemberton, of Cambridge. His mind was increasingly exercised through many years on the subject of religion. He was at times almost overpowered by an overwhelming sense of the majesty of God, and at other times the subject of the most painful temptations. In all outward steps he appears to have felt a very deep and sincere anxiety to find out and pursue the right course. I had occasionally met with him in his visits to Hertford, but had always found him in much confusion, and reasoning with bitterness on religious subjects. However, in the month of May 1841, one Sunday evening, I saw him enter Port Vale Chapel while I was preaching from Ex. xxiii. 20, 'Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way.' He joined me immediately after service, and entered into a quiet and serious conversation with me. I found to my surprise and joy he was not in the state which I had feared. For he described to me a clear and gracious discovery of the Lord's mercy to his soul, which had taken place about two years previously, had brought him into the very dust, made him assured of mercy, and enlightened him in a spiritual way, especially to discern the nature and evil of sin against God and Christ. Since that time he had indeed again been involved in much darkness and confusion, had been entangled with false teachers, and, in short, in perils of all sorts; yet he could not give up the hope, nor I for him, that the Lord had given him life.

In the following November he came to reside in Hertford, and became a settled attendant on my ministry. It may be said that he was never, for long together, happy in his own mind. He was continually harassed with perplexing doubts, so that a small trial often proved a great one to him. At times, however, all the unbelief and bondage of his spirit were entirely broken. I remember one occasion in which he had been almost

overwhelmed, and could not by all his *reasonings* bring in the least peace; but he was suddenly arrested, and brought out of all his trouble, by the power of this word, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' 'Oh,' he cried out, 'what heavenly reasoning is this!' By this he was made glad for some time, and, I believe, never to the end of his life could he mention those words without an acknowledgment that the power of God had entered his heart with them. His evident simplicity and humility made all his friends love him dearly; yet, it often became trying to see him so continually cast down, and especially to perceive the weakness of his spirit in wrestling against temptation. He was in fault here, and we dare not in the fear of God excuse him. Barren Sabbaths, dry times in prayer, darkness of soul, and heaviness of heart were too often the consequences of his fault, and great faults in themselves.

During his last illness, which commenced at the beginning of this year, 1852, he told me that while at Cambridge in the year 1838 the Lord had contended sorely against him, and cut off all his plans and contrivances; and that after all his worldly hopes were withdrawn, he seemed to himself for a while to be in a most perishing condition, without the least power to realize a better hope. The words which had entered with awe, and which he yet spoke of with fear and trembling, were these in the 8th of Job, 'Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.' 'So,' said he, 'as soon as the mire was withdrawn, those rushes and flags, all my hopes and prospects, withered at once—they needed no scythe to cut them down. I saw plainly that all their life was drawn from the mire of my worldly-mindedness. Oh, my dreadful condition at this discovery! "He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand." I remember rising up one night to pray, but I could not! I had no God to pray to! "Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." How I got on for some time I can hardly say; but in the autumn of the same year, a hope of another kind entered my heart —it was a hope in God; and one day for a few hours that hope made me to rejoice exceedingly. Why (said I) I am in possession of a hope yet: a hope which has not been cut down or withered. In the destruction of my former hope, this hope now rises up, even a hope in God himself!'

On another occasion he said, 'The enemy has several times tried to discompose me, but has not been suffered to do so. Is not this a great blessing? Oh, this peace in the immediate prospect of death, who could give it but the Lord? I would speak cautiously for he is the great and terrible God, and my sins have been dreadful! What a wonder it is to find this peace, and not to be able to understand it—this is what the word means, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding!" I cannot often get hold of any direct words of scripture, but I have thought my state like this,—Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. . . . Then said Jesus, hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Oh, that Lord Jesus Christ! It is he that is with me. I am alone with him. I see no one else. I do not think about the angels, nor any except Jesus! But then you know who he is, even the Lord God Almighty!'

The following Tuesday, June 29, I found conversation with him very profitable. The power which then rested on him was not indeed for full consolation, but rather for hope against hope (Rom. iv. 18). He described to me a very fearful conflict which had come on suddenly the preceding night, and lasted for about two hours, and language seemed to fail him in speaking of it. I gathered only from broken words that fear of God's terrible majesty, conviction of his own lost state as a sinner, and a mingling in of a feeling of Christ's sufferings for sin were all of them overpowering together. 'Who,' said he, 'can utter it? who knoweth the power of the cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" But oh, thou most blessed and divine Mediator! What would I not do rather than grieve thee! Blessed Lord Jesus, let me never grieve thee! All—all is through Jesus! I will not now say I have no hope; but I want Jesus to smile upon me, to give me one look of his mercy. The hope seems too good; a hope I cannot describe, of mercy too large to be received.'

The following evening and the next day he was under the pressure of deep conflict; though the unction of Christ's name resting on him was blessed indeed. I think I never saw more clearly manifest the power of the divine support in the day of tribulation. He was as one amazed and confounded as a lost sinner in himself, but full of reverence and love for Christ, as if he could not endure the thought of looking for help anywhere except wholly and exclusively to him. He dwelt with much feeling upon the doctrine of the divinity and humanity in one Person, as perceiving all his hope centred there; and 'Remember,' he said, 'his name is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow!' Nothing appeared more conspicuous throughout his illness than the holy reverence with which he both spoke of and addressed the Lord. He could not endure the thought of lightness, or irreverent boldness.

However, from this time to the end of his life, it pleased the Lord, in his divine wisdom, to keep him almost continually in very painful and distressing conflicts, which were especially overwhelming during the first fortnight. Without any injury to his memory as a pardoned sinner, it ought surely to be acknowledged that the Lord, in this dispensation, marked his former sins [in too readily giving way to unbelief], and, not without terror, enforced his word which says, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' The first time he was able to see me during this period, he spoke very despondingly, yet with a meekness and reverence of heart which made all except himself to abound in hope on his account. I said but little, knowing that I could neither take him nor myself out of the hand of the Judge of the whole earth; and I am sure his fiery trial was ordained for good to himself and others. Sometimes he would speak of sin with the deepest and keenest anguish, so as to prove searching and fearful to his fellow-sinners who heard him.

He was by no means left long without being 'holpen with a little help.' One of these revivals took place on the morning of July 7, when, beginning to recover after a dangerous bodily sinking, he was observed to be very quiet, and said, 'Jesus has helped me! Mercy is welcome news indeed to the guilty.' Then, with the deepest seriousness, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.'

On the evening of the 20th another friend called, to whom he said,

'I am very glad to see you: how kind of you to come and visit me on my sick bed. I want to praise the Lord for his mercies, but I am so weak I can find no words. Oh, wonderful! wonderful! Plucked thee burn ——.' Mrs. Davies then repeated the line of the hymn, which some time before had greatly delighted him,

'Pluck'd thee burning from the fire;'

adding, 'Is not that what you mean?' He replied, 'Yes, wonderful! for I was in great distress last week. Glory! glory! glory!' Then after a pause, 'Lord Jesus, throw me not away!' The friend replied, 'The Lord Jesus says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."' 'Ah,' he said, 'but when I get into darkness I feel so very weak that I say, But am I coming?' Soon he added, 'I am very glad to see you, it brings such an influence.'

From this time he lingered in such weakness that he could hardly bear any conversation. He often told Mrs. Davies that he found comfort, continuing mostly in prayer, though but seldom audibly so. On the last day of his life, with a smile, he beckoned twice with his hand, and taking an affectionate leave of her, he gradually sunk lower and lower, and breathed his last on Friday, July 30, aged 48 years.

June 18, *Friday*. I will give a very short sketch of the things which have befallen me since Sunday last. On Monday I was in the pit of fear and unbelief. Thus I went to Hitchin yesterday, and continued cut down till in quietly recounting with Mr. L. a few of my exercises, my bondage gave way. After dinner it returned again. The light seemed to change its direction; what had just shone on my hopes, shone now on my fears, and made me pray with much anguish. In this state, bound and rent, I concluded a short walk by myself, and afterwards became softer in spirit, and was led from one part of scripture to another, till I fell on these words, 'The Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not' (Lam. iii. 31–36). The operation of these words was so unbinding and gentle that all my fears left me, and I said, 'Have I nothing but this hope to preach about?' I went to chapel calmly, and felt stedfast. I contrasted these words of Jeremiah with his former words in the same chapter, 'He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone,' &c. What eagle's wings true faith, though but a touch of it, has! Oh, how holy this power is,—who can create it? Surely the Lord alone! *

* Not long after this date, various circumstances contributed to terminate Mr. Gilpin's weekly visits to Hitchin; but nearly four years later, viz. on March 24, 1856, he writes in his diary as follows:—'Some of my Hitchin congregation were present at Port Vale, both on Friday and yesterday. It led me to sorrowful reflection, after certain intimations which to this day I look back upon as showing the Lord's favour

July 9. Yesterday, being much cast down, I was led quietly to meditate on the words, 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God,' &c. (1 Pet. v. 6, 7), but I had a trying night from words which perhaps temptation oppressed me by, viz. 'He openeth his eyes, and he is not.' In the morning I prayed, An undivided heart towards thee give thou me. Thou art not a land of darkness. Clear the point for me, and set me upon the Rock. I thought I prayed thus before the living God. Then it was suggested to me, 'Remember how the word helped you, "Humble yourselves," &c.,' and I believed the Lord heard me, and would clear my case, and enable me to fulfil his will.

July 15. Let me thank thee, O Lord, for the help and comfort I have found this day. Though overborne with temptation three days this week, I have stood before my enemies and they have given back this day. I was also burdened with the Lord's word to others, as well as myself, and preached closely to their consciences from this word, 'I will yet for this be enquired of,' &c. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37).

July 25, *Sunday*. In the night I saw myself and my hearers, as if all overwhelmed, brought into a net of confusion, no help for us in God, and nothing left but that we should harden our hearts in despair. I arose just before sunrise, and was in my study for nearly an hour, and was enabled to resist the devil. The Lord appeared gracious. I cried for his help. I remembered every one of my hearers for whom I have hope, and cried for them also. I thought, This is the battle: we must not flinch here. In the end, the words of our Lord (upon which I had cast my eye) encouraged me: 'The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' I saw from this the difference between the first convictions, which, though painful, were yet by my falling under them made to help forward life; and these bitter convictions, that brought nothing with them but death unless resisted to the utmost. The last were therefore evidently the enemy's work. Lord, let it profit me that I thus minutely set down my helps in these days of sore trial. O do me good, and make me wait patiently for thy salvation. Amen.

1853. *April* 3, *Sunday*. I praise thee, O Lord, for granting me the renewal of faith. O if it please thee let me be rather as on Friday seeking without apparent fruit, than as on Saturday too dead and unbelieving to seek. When I said to several, 'I hope we shall find a blessing to-morrow,' the words froze upon my lips

in my engagement there. Whilst preaching from the words, "The Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of sinners," I felt a hope that the Lord Christ had fellowship with my infirmities. I do not wish to be too confident, but feel in a measure convinced that the part I took in it, and the stedfastness with which I cleaved, was by the grace of God, and will prove a blessing to me. On the other hand, I cannot quite think that some, who I nevertheless believe fear God, followed Christ in the matter. Wrong withdrawing, want of spiritual sympathy, and backsliding were manifest in some; to others I can attribute no blame.'

through unbelief, nor was I at all better till ten o'clock to-day. I did not believe—I could not believe. The word passed through me, 'They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord.' I found the place in Zech. vi, and again and even twice found the word like honey while preaching from it. Joshua crowned with many crowns, and, above all, the crowns preserved and given to the saints for a memorial. Lord, surely thou didst enable me to praise Christ. There were fifty-two members present, and some found it a good time. In the evening several met at Mr. Maydwell's, and we were especially pleased with the account given by Mary —— of a change she had experienced, commencing on Friday night, during my sermon from Mark ix. 22–24, when she was convinced of her unbelief, and her cry, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief,' was most fervent. Behold a great change followed, and the scriptures kept flowing in all Saturday. In the night she was twice waked with the words, 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved;' and beginning to lay it to heart, first recollected that it was Ordinance day. She knew a blessing would follow, and it did follow abundantly.

June 9, *Thursday*. Oh, what a day I passed yesterday, and what a painful night of wakeful desponding conviction! But this morning part of John viii appeared to me in a light I had never seen it; and I feel very desirous, by the mercy of God, to retain and improve it. Many whole-hearted sinners ignorant of themselves and of Christ, and one broken-hearted sinner full of shame and remorse, met before him. The Lord said, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. . . . And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out.' This is natural conviction: they knew they were wrong, and could not endure his word. 'Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?' The poor penitent alone endured; and Jesus said, 'Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.' This was very searching and awful in my heart.

June 12, *Sunday*. Though I had a particular help and liberty in preaching on Friday evening, from Psalm cxxx, as if the Lord, according to my measure, made it mine; yet on Saturday I not only lost the hope, but possessed the contrary. But this morning after breakfast I found myself praying. And surely I make no mistake in saying, that I entered into Psalm xxii more than ever in my whole life. I saw something of Christ's glory in humiliation in it, something of abject faith in him only, through all:—and I believed again as I preached, 'He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.'

(*Same evening*.) But I will add a few lines because I have further reason to give thanks. I had felt a touch with these words, 'The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death.' I said, 'O Lord, if it be thy will, keep this and let me

preach from it.' Yet I felt no opening, and was afraid of presuming. When I entered the pulpit this evening, all I had thought of besides dried up, and with some difficulty I was forced back upon that word. But oh, when I began my chains were loosed, my hope shone, my heart was enlarged, my tongue was free! It made me to feel the Lord was among us of a truth.

CHAPTER XV.

1853, 1854. The death of Mr. Burrell—Engagement to preach in London—Exercises connected with it—Spiritual encouragements in the ministry—A minister must be sent of God—The way of Jerusalem on earth—Eccles. xii. 1-7—Reference to Mrs. R.—The Lord's deep dispensations—The death of Mr. Bourne—The church at Sutton—Pressing trials—The joy of the righteous.

Oct. 19. It is a fortnight this day since our aged friend Mr. Burrell was taken ill while endeavouring to preach, and carried to his bed, where he yet lingers in mortal weakness. I hope at times this has brought me to lively and earnest prayer for a blessing on him, his bereaved flock, and on myself also. His spiritual state is most blessed. On Sunday morning (the 16th) he said, 'The day I have so often hinted at is come at last. I have had many good days. Oh, what aboundings, and what a prospect! What a prospect is before me! I shall "see him as he is," and never part from him! It is past the bounds of all human perception!' [He died Oct. 20, aged 83.]

Oct. 26. Yesterday morning I heard from the senior deacon requesting my attendance at Mr. Burrell's funeral to-morrow; and inviting me to preach in Titchfield Street on Sunday. It led to much exercise in my own mind, both on my own account and theirs. I wrote, telling him all my fears, and the things I thought their present condition called for. Afterwards I felt a merciful change. It appeared to me that if, after that (as I trust faithful) letter, he still pressed my going, I should find my way opened to do so freely; if not, I should be satisfied it was the Lord who shut the door.

Oct. 28. Yesterday I went to Mr. Burrell's funeral. Almost the whole congregation were assembled at the Cemetery Chapel, Kensal Green; but violent rains came on, and we were scattered at the grave. I could not enjoy the serious, yet spiritually comforting scene, because I felt a sore exercise lest in what followed I should entangle my way, and take wrong steps. Afterwards about forty met together, and I found liberty to press this one point,

'Let them but singly look to Christ,
And all are one in him.'

I learnt that my letter had been taken kindly, and that my coming on Sunday to preach was so heartily desired by all, that I felt my way opened to accede to their wishes.

[The reason why Mr. Gilpin feared that consenting to preach in Titchfield Street would entangle his way, was his feeling that some who then influenced the church there, had not the same clear spiritual power, and deeply tried, chastened experience as those who were its leaders when he first became acquainted with it; and with some of them he did not feel full unity of spirit. The gracious influence of the Holy Spirit it is which alone maintains true spiritual authority; and when that influence is withdrawn, the attempts, even of good men, to maintain church discipline and order, too often shackle rather than promote spiritual life. But it is our mercy to believe that through all the trial and sifting that follows the removal of a faithful pastor, the Lord is still the guide and refuge of his scattered people, and, faithful to his word, will not suffer the least grain to fall upon the earth (Amos ix. 9).

The consideration of perplexing and humbling trials like these, common as they are among the churches of Christ, is always profitable to such as are led to discern in them the overruling hand of God in making all things work together for their good. In reverting to them in the present instance we desire quite to pass by those personal feelings and prejudices which on such occasions will strive to intrude themselves. If we are all brought to acknowledge the needs be for the painful lessons that have been appointed for us, we shall confess that we have no room to boast, and much cause to humble ourselves before the Lord, as it is written, 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.']

Nov. 5, Saturday. Last Saturday in the prospect of my evening journey I became painfully tried, chiefly through the fears for myself which often invade my soul. Just as I caught sight of old St. Mary-le-bone Church, where, in the year 1826, I was ordained, my mind was made restless to know whether that event had a blessing in it (in disguise) for me. This touched a subject that for many months past has tried me deeply; but just at this moment a gentle peace entered my heart, which seemed like a blessing resting on me. It changed my state, fixed my mind, and made me entreat the Lord to bless my ministry on the following day.

On Sunday morning I read in the congregation the account of Mr. Burrell's death, and preached briefly from John i. 6–9. I felt impressed, and believe others were also; but afterwards all my light and expectation for the evening service vanished, and left a painful blank. I continued crying, very dark and empty in myself, and by degrees the words opened again which I had preached from in Port Vale the Sunday before, 'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them

that fear him,' &c. It was afterwards very sweet to preach to a large and attentive congregation.

Nov. 6, *Sunday.* Yesterday I visited several [in Hertford], and was pleased with some. As for myself, I sunk low. At last looking down, with my Bible before me, my eye fell on the words, 'He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.' They had often for months past severely tried me, but now hope entered with the words, and I felt enlarged to preach from Gal. iii. 10–14, persuaded that redemption in Christ secures the wedding garment. O Lord, I praise thee for this precious hope.

Nov. 11, *Friday.* Some things revived in my heart fear and trouble. I caught hold of the 89th Psalm, which had strengthened me on Wednesday, and I found help. I began to enquire, What is the real spiritual unity? And I saw it was this:—to be poor bankrupts before Jesus Christ, feelingly longing for him to be all in all: here God's children meet together, and here they are safe. I heard from my sister that my sermon in London on Sunday evening had greatly affected many who were seriously waiting on the Lord, and that I should probably be invited to take every Wednesday evening service, and once in two months to go for the Sunday. I cried in my spirit especially for mercy, and was satisfied in this that I was laying all before the Lord. I seemed strengthened, as to the outward point, with this caution; not to commit myself to any man, but to be willing as a brother to help.

Nov. 19, *Saturday.* On Wednesday last I received a letter according to the above intimation. My heart was strengthened to look to Jesus, and I must acknowledge his kindness in giving me power to believe and hope. My way to London was made plain and easy then.

Dec. 3, *Saturday.* On Wednesday in London I preached, with much feeling, from the words, 'By faith Abraham, when he was called,' &c. Mr. Maddy * and my nephews were present at family prayers, and I had a time beforehand of deep confession and faith,

* The Rev. Watkin Maddy was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he became Second Wrangler, and afterwards Fellow and Assistant Tutor of his College. He took Orders, but finding he could not conscientiously continue a minister in the Establishment, he gave up his connection with it, resigning his Fellowship, and for many years resided in London in the house of the late Mr. James Bourne, engaged in preparing young men for the Universities. His acquaintance with Mr. Bourne originated in the mutual friendship which existed between himself and Mr. Gilpin's brother-in-law, the Rev. Charles Jeffreys, who was one year his senior at St. John's. Mr. Maddy became much attached to the ministry of Mr. Burrell. He died unmarried at Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, Aug. 13, 1857, aged 59, where he lies buried in the churchyard by the side of Mr. Bourne, between whom and himself there had existed for so many years the strongest spiritual friendship. The inscription on his tomb is in accordance with his own wish as expressed in the following words, 'If any memorial should be placed over my grave, let it bear these words which the Lord was once pleased to speak upon my heart, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." These words God has fulfilled to me to this day.'

which enabled me to enlarge upon Joshua i. I saw a depth in these words, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein (i. e. in the whole written word) day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.' This meditation is the finding of Christ in the word. It so encouraged me that I preached from it in my own chapel on Friday evening.

Dec. 9, *Friday.* I went up to Town on Wednesday, and preached from Jabez's prayer. I feel a hope it was attended with meltings of heart; but the unbending spirit of one of the leaders seems to overshadow the whole church. I have reason to be humbled before the Lord.

Dec. 15. This day I returned from London with a feeling of gratitude to the Lord for the great kindness he showed me last night, in preaching.

On my arrival in Town I found that my nephew, William Benson, being persuaded that the Lord had called him to the ministry, had already made this known to the deacons. I feel a hope the Lord chose my subject for me, and gave me light in treating it. The text was Jer. iii. 10–15. My sermon was more than an hour and a quarter long; but, if I may judge from the attention of the congregation, not too long. The darkness I have observed in some, as to the nature of a really spiritual call to the ministry, made me feel the subject most momentous. Respecting my nephew himself, I said I would not speak in his commendation; for, believing his call to be of God, and believing them to fear God, I knew that he must prove them, and they must prove him.

1854. *Jan.* 2, *Monday.* Yesterday I preached in the morning upon the jubilee trumpets sounding. I cannot describe the sweetness and power I felt in part of it: 'Thou shalt proclaim liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof.' Surely, Lord, thou didst grant me grace to discern something of Christ's glory. In the evening I preached from 2 Timothy i. 1, 2; and saw plainly in many of the verses how deeply his soul must have been exercised and tried when thus addressed by the apostle. This discernment seemed to make the subject encouraging and edifying. Several were humbled and melted at the Ordinance.

O Lord, let this be a year of faith, and sounding of these trumpets amongst us. Let us discern and hold fast the liberty; liberty to serve thee without fear.

Jan. 18. I have been mercifully helped myself, both in my own soul and in the ministry. I have also been able to rejoice in the persuasion that my labour has been in the Lord, and not in vain. The help I have found in my ministry, especially in London, has been accompanied with a certain increasing light, making the gospel in its pure fulness more feelingly needful for me a sinner. So that if hope in Christ were now removed, my heart would tremble, and be desolate indeed. Yea, I do tremble, and yet rejoice.

There has been an outpouring of love amongst my hearers here. They have often met to speak to one another in the fear of the Lord. Mr. W. Maydwell has had the oil of gladness and sweet spirit of adoption abundantly poured out upon him; so that his conversation and his preaching on Sunday the 8th inst., when I was in Town, were most refreshing to all who fear God. Mr. Spence also has been favoured, and his preaching that evening from the words, 'Lord, to whom shall we go,' &c., met the feelings of the people.

While tried on account of the state of things in London, the words, 'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive; how can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' were so presented to me, that I was compelled in godly fear to preach from them there the same evening; which I did with very tender feelings of hope and love. I spent a night in humbling fears and painful temptations, but in the morning I resolved to print my sermon on the Christian ministry, from Jer. iii. 10–15, dedicating it to all who fear God in the connection, omitting all personal allusions lest they should be diverted from the needful spiritual point. Help, Lord.

[The following is an extract from the sermon here alluded to.]

The call of God, of which I now speak—God's divine call to his ministering servants to preach the gospel of his grace—is great, because God is great. As Elihu replies to the murmurings and questionings even of Job himself, 'I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.' There is an exceedingly great fault here, in that we are apt to make far too much of ourselves, and far too little of God. 'But to this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' The call of God is not in the heart of any man who is light-minded; who sees nothing but the people; whose frame of spirit does not bear witness with his word, that he is engaged continually in looking to the Lord, and finding the mind of the Lord, through the Spirit, by the written word, in accordance with that record only.

But this divine call does not differ in its nature from the Lord's gracious light and direction, found, when spiritually sought for, by every quickened believer in his daily walk. This appears fanatical to those who are destitute of spiritual life, but others know that it is no fancy, but the sober truth. It is given only in accordance with what the written word declares, as Christ says, 'I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' But some will have it, that the written word itself is to supply this direction, i. e. that this direction is only our judgment exercised upon the letter of the word. In so thinking, they do greatly err, not really knowing the scriptures, neither the power of God. A like mistake is in many, on the subject of a minister's divine call: but it appears remarkable that any who are truly spiritual, should not see and own at once, that so great a matter as becoming the Lord's mouth to the people, must assuredly, in proportion to its greatness, require a very clear direction, and so, a call from the Lord.

The man who is favoured to discern this divine call, is made conscious

by it, that the Lord sends him to preach, not man. Though men may be subservient, as instruments, to give outward authority to the minister, or to strengthen his hands by their own call to him, in all this they do but act as God's servants, not as principal agents. The minister they thus acknowledge and the officers and people acknowledging him act or should act only as the Lord's deputies, the minister in *his* place, the others in *theirs*. Notwithstanding all the fiery controversies upon this subject, which have rent the visible church of Christ into a thousand sects, may we not thankfully and humbly believe that the word of God, and practice of the first age, accords with the above view? Thus we read in the beginning of Acts xiii: There were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, and 'as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.' Then it follows immediately that these were thus sent forth, not by man (that point sinks down), but 'by the Holy Ghost.' I know the case of modern ministers is not in all respects the same. Paul and Barnabas were greater than we are. Christ does not in our day set apart twelve apostles, nor the Holy Ghost add two to their number. But was not the Lord's direction and authority in this transaction, the *ordinary*, and not the *extra*-ordinary part of it? Was not the submission of these prophets and teachers to the will and choice of God, *their* duty no less than it is *ours*? Are we to imagine that Christ and the Holy Ghost have ceased from this rule in the church, contrary to Christ's express words that this rule shall last for ever? For the Spirit shall 'abide with you for ever,' says Christ (John xiv. 16); and again, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20). I know that many members of the outward church—yea, whole visible churches—would have us think this rule to have been confined to the first age only; and if I address those who do not understand the Lord's effectual call of grace, they are not likely to understand or believe in his special call to the ministry; but such as know the Lord, will acknowledge the reality of both these calls, and also be very thankful for them both.

But to proceed with the main point in hand—the minister's divine call: I say further, that it is not merely one definite intimation of God's will that he should preach, but it is rather the concurrence of numberless intimations, and various circumstances, inward and outward, which all conspire together, and keep collecting as he advances, to strengthen him in the work. In the early beginnings of the spiritual course of many, there is often a kind of fleshly zeal, with much natural feeling in it, which the person for a time mistakes for this heavenly call: but those whom the Lord favours, are enabled sooner or later to detect the deception of this. Sometimes *a true* call begins in the midst of all this excess of feeling; but the subject of it, through God's mercy, gets disappointed, humbled, mortified, till perhaps he accomplishes, like Moses, forty years in the wilderness of Midian. Where the call is really of God, providential events, and spiritual exercises, conflicts, fears, and hopes in the man himself, gradually prepare the way; so that, when the Lord's time comes, the open door is set before him.

There are often added clear and strong applications of the written

word: only (as in such applications generally) the man who receives them does not satisfy himself merely with the words *coming* into his mind, for he knows that his own imagination, or even Satan's temptations, may bring the letter of the word to his mind: but he watches *the effects* of the application. Does it bring into his soul a divine light, so as to enable him to know, without the need of a neighbour to explain, that the Lord's power was in it? Does it soften, humble, enlarge, and expand his heart, draw out his spiritual affections, kindle love to the Lord and his church? Does it quiet all the tumult of his conflicting feelings, confirm his faith and his hope, and strengthen his patience to endure: even though he should have long to wait; though man should not receive his testimony; or though all things for a time should conspire together against him? If so indeed, then is his call of God.

Such a call, when clearly felt, is also continually *increasing*. Not that it delivers the man from weakness, fears, temptations, unbelief, and all other attendant evils; for these prove altogether 'a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan,' to buffet him. The man is often bowed down with them all, and perhaps for a season, all hope, even in the reality of his call, is ready to expire. The Lord's time for action often comes when he is at the very lowest ebb through all these evils, so that he can scarcely venture one foot forward; yet then, coming with his empty vessel to a full Christ, he is replenished all at once, and no one is able to stand before him until he has accomplished all the Lord's will and work.

Again, the man who has this divine call, may be straitened, chastened, deserted, and in his own feelings almost quite rejected, yet he finds, through all, that the Lord never disowns this *call* in his heart. Before action he felt confounded; but in the action he obtains clearness and confidence. Obedience to this call neither puffs him up, ensnares him, nor leads him into temptation; but invariably loosens his bands, weakens the hold of temptation, instructs and edifies his soul; so that often, while he preaches to others, the Lord enforces the same instruction upon himself.

Lastly, the man enjoys a reverential and spiritual communion with God in his exercises in obedience to this call. He may feel himself a most unworthy sinner; so he really is; yet he proves the word, that 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;' and in nothing is the strength and reality of this divine call more clearly proved, than in this continual intercourse and communion with God, enjoyed from time to time in the constant following of it.

But it is needful to say a few words on another point; and that is, what I have mentioned as the people's call to a minister—which is in some cases needful for bringing a minister forward; and always useful in its place; provided we do not put it out of its place, by denying the Lord's call, and exalting man's call in its stead.

If such as fear God, and can give a scriptural reason of their hope, unite to call a minister, because he is manifested in their conscience as an accepted servant of Christ's, no good man will despise or lightly reject such a call. But he will never imagine that it can avail one tittle, except he can also prove himself to be called of God. How many, ignorant of this call of God, have boasted of the authority committed to them by man, or of the good-will and good opinion of their hearers, so as to show that they only stand up in man's name, and in heart make flesh their arm!

The apostle Paul says (1 Cor. iv), 'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ;' i. e. if really and indeed we be so, if *God's call* clear that point, then indeed let us be so accounted. But the apostle does not mean that *otherwise* we should be so accounted. He goes on to say, 'with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by (i. e. against) myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord!' You see the weight and importance of the Lord's judgment (and therefore also of the Lord's calling) with him: for he does not despise the people; no good man will; only in comparison with the Lord's judgment, their judgment is a very small matter. As it was with the apostle, so will it be with all, who receive of the same Spirit.

April 15. I went to London impressed with the grief which the trial at P. causes us. In Town I further heard that [one who had long been in a despairing state], being worse, wished to see me. I went there before preaching, and found it an impressive preparation. I preached from the words, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.' But afterwards, when I feared it met the views of one who was in a gloomy, legal state, I was grieved because I did not pointedly express the difference I felt between what I said, and the legal perversion of it which he upheld. I had often done this, especially by letter to him, but abstained on this occasion as thinking it useless. I perceived, however, I lost light by this negligence, and gradually the holy fear seemed less influential. Lord; pardon me, and set me spiritually on my guard.

April 21. I went in much exercise to London on Wednesday, and was with them in fear and trembling. The Lord enabled me in my weakness to cast off all fear of man, and I drew the bow at my full strength. The humbling word (Isa. xl. 6–8) proved as rain and dew.

May 22, *Monday*. When I heard the result of the church-meeting at Titchfield Street on the 12th inst., from my sister, I supposed I should not have to go again to London, and expected a letter to that effect. But in the course of the following night I dreamt that I was again amongst them, and in much confusion. I said to myself, What, am I expected to preach here again! I have neither text nor matter. Immediately these words dropped into my heart, 'Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation;' and I waked saying, Am I really to preach there again? It really came to pass so. I spent the forenoon of Wednesday by myself in earnest prayer; indeed, as I hope, I put on the good armour, and went there and preached in great quietness of spirit from the very text I had felt in my sleep. It suited my feelings well. For I could hope indeed I was the Lord's servant, though worthy only to be rejected. 'Put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.'

I desire to mention with awe that I had these words presented to me in the night after this my last preaching in Town, and clothed with a

light I had never seen them in before, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!' This is the way of Jerusalem, from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, and from Christ's time till now. It is the way of the church upon earth. Were it not for this, their own perverse, rebellious will, how softly would Christ gather them under his feathers. But that this will of theirs may be broken, he often now has to grind them almost to powder. It was very serious; and I preached from it in Port Vale Chapel on Friday night, being then further tried by hearing of dear Mr. Bourne's illness.

[At the church-meeting above referred to, a division took place: part of the congregation settled under the late Mr. Thaine, and part withdrew, and united under the ministry of Mr. William Benson *. In order to conclude Mr. Gilpin's allusions to his preaching in London on the occasion of this trial, the date has been a little anticipated. The diary will now be resumed at Feb. 21.]

Feb. 21. I believe the Lord favoured me with a particular light upon Eccles. xii. 1–7, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not,' &c. I brought it forward in the pulpit on Sunday evening thus:—My text was 2 Tim. i. 12, 'Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' I read 2 Peter i; and in the course of my sermon said, 'The Lord grant us grace to attend to these admonitions, not legally but spiritually; to make our calling and election sure, before "the evil days." There is an affecting instance amongst us now, of one who has very often by grace made her calling and election sure; and sure in consequence is the blessing upon her for ever; and yet she cannot now make it sure; for, as Solomon says, the evil days are come, fears are in the way, the grasshopper is a burden, desire fails, and the silver cord is about to be loosed.' [The case here alluded to is that of Mrs. R.]

I think I never before felt in so eminent a degree the exceeding fitness of the word of God, to keep us within the bounds of truth, that we should neither overdrive, nor frighten back, nor yet lull to sleep the sheep of Christ.

March 18. I received a long letter from one of my sister's-in-law, containing many extracts from her son's letters. They are remarkable for firm clearness of mind, enlightened discernment of his state as a sinner, a kind of prayer in hope that he should one day be converted. Yet there is no evidence that he attained, or that he himself thought he attained, to the true saving knowledge. It obliged me to write a long, kind, but I hope faithful letter, saying,

* Mr. W. Benson is the eldest son of the late Rev. John Benson, Rector of Norton-sub-Hamdon, by his second marriage with Mr. Gilpin's sister Frances. A chapel was procured for him in Edward's Place, near Langham Place, where he preached until 1872, when he succeeded Mr. Gilpin in the pastorate of Port Vale Chapel.

'The Lord dwells in the thick darkness, and if we desire to be near him in Christ we must be content to dwell in that darkness often. Those who in religion know nothing of the true conflict of faith will always keep themselves out of that darkness, and endeavour to bring us out of it also. But we must not listen to their syren song which would make us comfortable indeed, but not strengthen us to take at the Lord's hand the cup which he has mingled for us. We have something else to do with the Lord's deep dispensations than endeavour to settle, (which indeed we can never do,) the depths of his judgment and mercy to others. Do they lead us to see more of the depth of our sin, and the depth of Christ's love?'

[The case alluded to contrasted in some respects with one which occurred about the same time amongst Mr. Gilpin's own people, exciting his solicitude and that of several God-fearing relatives. But the following sentences from his pen, in reference to it, are nevertheless further illustrative of the line of teaching here touched upon:—]

I have been weighing this case, and I believe it to be both instructive as it respects us, and hopeful in itself. I do not say that the case was fully cleared, nor is it my aim to try to make it clear. I think rather, that where the Lord is pleased to leave a cloud, we shall do well not to try to clear it away; but to set forth the dispensation as it really took place, and pray that we may find profit from it; and the principal profit will be, grace to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. But we are naturally anxious to endeavour to clear away the cloud which obscures such cases, however in some respects hopeful. Now my counsel is rather, that this fleshly desire should be checked. It is better that you and I, if permitted, should abide in the cloud, that we may be near the Lord, and taught by him. David was in this cloud when he wrote the 39th Psalm, and he says, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.'

April 10. I was much encouraged yesterday, having a baptism in my morning service; and I preached on the words, 'He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly,' &c. It seemed in a peculiar way a word in season: many testified the same. About the middle of the service I began to feel the searching, humbling, confirming word, so as to make me believe that surely the Lord condescended to be present.

June 3, *Saturday*. On Thursday morning, the 1st inst., my sister Matilda and I left London at 6.15 A.M., and reached Sutton Coldfield to a late breakfast. We were very soon introduced to our dear dying friend Mr. Bourne. Oh, what a heavenly sight! Was ever a death-bed more glorious! He knew not how to express his feelings of unutterable love and glory! His deep self-abasing sense of Christ's divine redemption. He sent for us continually through the day, and spoke for a minute or two. His mind retains all its natural firmness, and even its elastic play. Yet the holiness of his

joy is very conspicuous. I saw he was lifted on eagle's wings above all troubles; even the troubles of God's Zion are by Christ himself taken from his shoulder, and taken upon himself. Therefore I dared not ask his advice how we must manage at Sutton without him. I said only, 'The government shall be upon Christ's shoulder.' He replied, 'So it is! so I have found. I have nothing to say to them but that I love them all, and that the truths I have preached to them will do to live by, aye, and to die by too! That they will!'

June 14, *Wednesday*. Yesterday I heard that on Sunday evening at half-past seven my dear friend and father in the Lord, James Bourne, entered his eternal rest, aged 81. I cannot refrain from testifying what I believe, that he has proved a special instrument of God to me. Though I feel very far off the point I inwardly discern, and this causes personal fear to abound in my heart; yet surely the Lord opened my eyes to see the truth, and my heart to love it, through Mr. Bourne's instructions,—in letters, conversation, and preaching. It is about twenty years since I first became acquainted with him; and my feelings have never varied, nor my firm persuasion that I have seen in him (a sinner of like passions with me), the image of Christ upon earth; the new man, created in Christ, living by the power of God.

On Sunday I was much led out in prayer and praise for him, both in the morning and evening service. We had heard continual accounts of the oil of gladness which the Lord kept pouring upon him, so that his sinking frame could scarcely sustain the weight of glory. I was preaching from the words, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;' and afterwards found this was at the very moment that his mortality was swallowed up of life. The last words he was able to articulate were such as these, 'Come! come! Let me dwell on high! He is nigh! he is nigh!'

I desire to say, Glory be to God for this blessed example of the power of his grace.

June 20. Mr. Bourne has left his chapel to me and Mr. W. Maydwell; and how can we there provide for the spiritual wants of the people, according to their need? The government is on Christ's shoulder.

Aug. 24. The flock at Sutton has been much laid upon my heart. I feel a hope the Lord has brought me down to pray for them, and for myself, in Christ's name; and after entreating him to keep me from writing my own words, I sent a few lines to-day to one of them, saying, 'The Lord commanded his disciples to "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." This is what I am made to desire with all my heart to wait for; and have found an earnest spirit of prayer for you also, and others amongst whom I hope the Lord has given me a charge. I find these words very suitable, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the NAME of

the God of Jacob defend thee." This is Christ's name, under which we must all take shelter. Faith to do so is indeed, as Hart says, "a weakening, emptying grace." If Christ be all, then we shall be nothing. Lord, help and guide. Amen.'

Oct. 11. I will endeavour briefly to recount a few of the particular occurrences which, since my last entry in Aug. 24, have so exercised me that I have not found a heart to write as before in this book. On the one hand, I consider the present tried state of the church at P. On the other hand, I have been in great trouble in consequence of the profligacy and awful death of ——. When I remember his conversations I am made doubly afraid. How was it, after all, that poor wretched man, who appeared to have such a savour of godliness, and really had so much light in the word of God, deceived himself to utter destruction! The news reached me on Saturday, Sept. 9, and almost upset me. On Sunday I preached in great perturbation from the death of Nadab and Abihu; and in this part, 'Aaron held his peace,' was raised to a little hope, that the Lord would spare me. In the evening Mr. W. Maydwell quoted words which have not ceased to affect my mind, and enter my heart with prayer, 'When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.' This trial and the other seem to have a deep uprooting effect, as if I was ground by them as between two millstones.

Oct. 20. I dare not speak or write decisively as respects myself; my ministry and personal state seem searched deeply, and I can only cry on. I thought last Friday I had a clearer hope than ever before, since these trials smote me, in the 30th chapter of Isaiah, from which I preached, and many parts of which gave me relief. I have continued to feel a little comfort in this, 'The day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.' I thought I saw afar off the joy which is spoken of, 'Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.'

CHAPTER XVI.

1855-1857. Account of Mrs. Boalter—Preaches at Edward's Place Chapel—Martin Boos—Turning to the Lord—Conversation of a friend—Visits to Mrs. R.—Mr. Small—Christ the way—Trial overruled—Review of the whole case of Mrs. R.

Feb. 3, *Saturday.* This has been a very painful week to me, through temptations and fears. I think my state at the worst was checked yesterday by a visit to our old friend Mrs. Boalter, now dying at 89. Many of the friends have told me they have been

both awed and refreshed by the evident power of the Lord's holy presence with her.

Oh, how I have lamented my own hardened condition, unable till yesterday to feel anything of this! though, if the Lord enable me, I desire to feel very thankful that a believer should be thus dying in the Lord, who acknowledges with all her heart that it pleased God to call her effectually through my ministry.

Account of Mrs. Boalter.

About the year 1833 she began occasionally to attend my ministry, and as I enforced the necessity of spiritual convictions and a clear discovery of mercy, she describes herself as having had some testimony in her conscience that I spoke the truth. She had been accustomed for years to apply all the promises to herself, and to leave the threatenings (as she afterwards said) to the wicked, and to resist all doubts and misgivings as temptations: she was now reluctantly compelled to acknowledge in heart she had been wrong. After a year or two she declared these convictions openly, and gave up her attendance at her former place of worship. In the year 1835 she spoke at times very strongly and consistently of her fixed persuasion that her former hopes and profession were vain, and that, since she had fully fallen under this conviction, she had found occasionally some openings of a better hope.

Notwithstanding these hopeful beginnings there was an overcasting, for by degrees she seemed to repose too much upon this light in her understanding, and her conversation began to have less savour in it, and she herself to slide into an easy indifferent state of soul. Generally when she expressed any hope or joy it was with a lightness which made me afraid of receiving it with encouragement; but, on the other hand, if any particular trial or foreboding cast a gloom, there was a measure of tenderness conveyed with her words, which always renewed my hope for her. I accounted for these things by considering that in expressing comfort she easily slid into the spirit she had rested in for years, whereas her fears and convictions were new to her, and were expressed in a more genuine and feeling manner. She says she had a deep exercise about this time on her 70th birthday, from a persuasion of the danger she was in, because she had lived to the age of man without once having known Christ for herself. She also recollected that amongst some old books which she had thrown away for lumber was one, which some years ago in the act of tearing up for the fire, she had saved, out of respect for the name of Christ which she saw scattered up and down its pages. She now looked out the old book, and found it a mutilated copy of Bunyan's sermon on the Broken Heart, which she read through and through with some understanding.

In November 1838 she was deprived of her husband by a sudden stroke, and her trial connected with this made it a most painful affliction to her; it revived also the remembrance of some former painful family trials, by which, together with her poverty, solitude, and feebleness, she was brought very low indeed. About four months after this she told me something she had felt encouraging, with a simplicity which enabled me to feel a distinct hope for her. She said in going up-stairs one night in

great trouble, she had this question put into her heart, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' she replied, 'Because I have lost Jesus;' and was answered, 'He is gone before you: press on—press hard.' I went home and wrote this little account, and found so much liberty in praying for her that I was greatly encouraged.

By degrees she began to find that her trouble grew keener, and she was often heavily oppressed, and tempted. Seasons of relief and comfort there were, yet these were not always expressed with the simplicity and tenderness which open the heart of such as fear God to receive our testimony, so that she still found much trial in her intercourse with the friends. This excited the natural enmity of her heart, and she began to feel prejudices against some whom she knew in her conscience to be the children of God. This alarmed her. The ministry became very painful to her: and sometimes I found her spirit dark and bound in consequence. When things seemed most gloomy I was again encouraged on her behalf by finding her case particularly impressed upon me in prayer, but this hope was accompanied with the conviction that I must go to her, and, in a more particular manner than ever before, point out her faults to her. It pleased God to enable me to do this; and I warned her with such hope and affection in my own heart for her, that I was not aware my words had wounded her at all, but thought they had imparted to her the persuasion I had myself that the Lord was with her. However, the effect on her was far otherwise; for she afterwards acknowledged, that I had scarcely shut the door before her heart was filled with such bitterness and prejudice, that she never felt her sin so great and uncontrollable in all her life. This brought her to many painful confessions of her guilt without much sensible hope at the time. 'I fell down,' she afterwards expressed herself, 'on Monday night, but it was not till the following Thursday that I found any encouragement.' The encouragement alluded to came thus. Her attention was directed to the first part of Heb. xii. She first felt this clause, 'Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.' She was enabled to look to him as she had never before done, with a distinct faith that he at the same moment looked upon her; and this look greatly broke her heart: and when she went on to the words, 'Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself,' she became so ashamed of her pride and enmity in all she had felt against me and others in her own justification, that she knew not how to acknowledge her vileness in suitable words. This was about Dec. 8, 1839, and she did not mention it to me for several days; but the power of that look from the Lord Jesus still continued to enlighten, confirm, and soften her heart. His condescension appeared very great in thus regarding her from his holy place, and my impression was that a ladder whose top reached to heaven, had been let down into her heart (Gen. xxviii. 12).

After this she continued for a time to find the word of God both searching and encouraging to her. She was particularly impressed with part of Ezek. vi, which engaged her attention for a long time, and opened to her the Lord's kindness in her severe and humbling trials. 'Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains' ('Oh,' she said, 'I've been one of those mountains through my pride!') . . . 'Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. . . . And I will lay the dead carcases of the children of Israel before their idols.' This last

part seemed very dark to her at first, but after a time she felt its application to the harrowing trials through which she had been called to pass; and she found much submission of heart.

Shortly after this she joined the Communion (being very tenderly led in her spirit), and was greatly refreshed; but she had a burden remaining till the ensuing Good Friday evening, 1840. On that occasion the discourse was from part of Rom. v, 'Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' She felt the saving efficacy of that blood. She said to me afterwards, 'Oh, that blood! I never felt it so before. It seemed to cover me, and go through and through me. I felt it had washed me, and the Lord had now given me power to receive the atonement. All the burden was gone.'

About the conclusion of the summer fresh trials awaited her, and renewed tokens of mercy were vouchsafed her. The Lord graciously brought these words to her heart with confirming power, 'Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure' (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). The effect was spiritual, clear, and deep. I found her afterwards in a state of tender seriousness and humiliation of heart, very small in her own eyes, full of gratitude and praise. The Lord showed her (she said) that she was within that covenant in which all things that befel her, her troubles as well as all her joys, were ordered for her by him: and this passage, together with that one in Romans about the atoning blood, and that in Hebrews about 'looking unto Jesus,' now followed her wherever she went. Now also she was much engaged in tracing past things, and the Lord pointed out to her circumstances in which his hand had guided her, although she had not known it, and could not have believed that they were ordained for good, as she now perceived. So that these things became, as John Bunyan expresses it, like golden seals let down from heaven confirming the covenant of mercy with her.

In the month of February, 1843, she passed through some deep and refining trials in her spirit. I never before, except once, saw her brought so low; and that was when her trial issued in the opening of Heb. xii to her. But on the occasion I now treat of, the effect of her trials seemed more purely spiritual than ever before. She had been too ill to leave her house the previous Sunday, and for three days before that, she had been in great depths. Her words brought great awe upon those who heard them with an understanding heart. She said, 'My deep trouble was no temptation. It was through an awful discovery of my wicked heart, made to me by the Lord himself. I was without hope on Thursday night. Oh, thought I, now I am lost, lost, lost! On Sunday I was looking for a passage in Psalm cxix, and I lighted upon the following words which I was not looking for, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." This word was my text for the whole of that day. But this morning a word of encouragement has come. The Lord has told me that he is with me, and I do not think he would have spoken so to a castaway. I remember before this trouble came on he said, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." But oh, my black desert, and my corrupt heart! I cannot rejoice at these.'

About a fortnight afterwards, being taken exceedingly ill, she said, 'When the attack came on, I was frightened and cried, saying, Lord,

save me! But he answered me plainly, "I have saved thee with an everlasting salvation." It was not, I may save, or will save; but it was, "I have saved." Oh, how deep it sunk! It went deeper than all my disease. In the light of it all my former things shone brightly. I know not how to praise him enough. Bless the Lord, O my soul.'

As she began to recover from this illness she was favoured with such spiritual light and power in the scriptures, and especially in a very simple, but (as I believe) divine application of the whole account of Ruth to her soul, that I must record a little of it. She spoke as follows:—

'I could not have believed that I ever could or should be brought to such a clearness and certainty of the Lord's everlasting mercy, as I now feel. Also I find the book of Ruth exceedingly precious to me. It began to be so when I was very low in my mind. One night I recollected that Ruth went a gleaning, and I thought, I will go a gleaning too, by reading the book of Ruth, though I do not feel able to gather much corn, I may perhaps find an ear or two, and by degrees even a handful. So I turned to the book of Ruth, and read it through carefully. Oh, the sweetness, power, and richness of it! I cannot describe it. When I read how Naomi had gone out full, but the Lord brought her back empty; and afterwards when Boaz blessed Ruth for her cleaving to Naomi, and said, "A full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Then her going out to glean, and the great kindness of Boaz to her, and all he said to her, and of her, especially this, "Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her." All these things were very comforting. Then again I felt this part—that Boaz was her near kinsman, who of right must marry her, and she was to go and lie at his feet, and she said, Spread thy skirt over me. Oh, I thought, if I may but go too; and lie at the feet of the Lord Jesus!—and I did so, and the Lord was very gracious to me. So this led me to Ezek. xvi, and there I found again that the Lord spreads his skirt over us, and brings us to those beautiful ornaments, yes gold, and silver, and jewels. But when I read further how we set these before our idols, how was my soul humbled; how I saw that we do so; how I wondered at the Lord's goodness who still keeps his covenant, his everlasting covenant! I hope I shall remember this at all times. But I must go on with Ruth. How great her humility was when she fell on her face and said to Boaz, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes?" and again, "Though I be not like unto one of thy handmaidens." No, indeed; she thought herself worst and least of all. So it is, so it is; and Lord, why have I found grace in thine eyes?

'When I read of the kinsman that was still nearer than Boaz, I thought this was very like the flesh, which lusts against the Spirit, and does not wish to have anything to do with the Lord's work. But I read further that he had an inheritance of his own, which he was afraid of marring—so he said, I cannot take Ruth, "lest I mar my own inheritance." I thought, What is this marring, and this inheritance he was afraid of marring? Yesterday morning I took this difficulty to the right quarter; I said, Now do Lord, if it please thee, show me what that means. In the same moment words came very strongly into my heart, "It is the old stock." Oh, how I saw it in an instant,—the old stock of self-righteousness, our own inheritance, that we are so fond of that it

must not be marred! Now to think of that kinsman, he rejected Ruth and all, lest he should mar his old stock. That is just like us, like me however; oh, what would I have done to have kept this old stock! He could not see what he gave up, that he might keep his old stock; neither can we see it till the Lord shows us. Sir, how many pulls have you given to pluck away this old stock, while I was doing all I could to keep it? but I am glad to give it up now. Soon after I had found the words which enlightened me about this, these words were added, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."'

But one of the sweetest touches of spiritual communion, the effect of which abode with Mrs. Boalter to the end of her life, she found about the close of 1848. The words came to her heart, 'I am the good Shepherd.' She replied, 'Lord, I am but a scattered sheep, and stray from thy fold.' He said, 'I will seek thee, I will lay thee on my shoulders, I will bring thee into the fold, and there thou shalt rest.' She had sorely suffered from temptations and fiery darts of the enemy, resembling some described by John Bunyan in the Grace Abounding; and she said, 'Oh, it has been hard fighting,—an evil heart, a tempting devil, an angry God! yet through all I must hold fast his promise to me, "I will bring thee to my fold, and there thou shalt rest."'

In June 1849 she felt a serious intimation that her trials were not over. She was considering how long a time she had been spared, and prayed to know the reason. The word fell, 'That you may glorify me in the fires.' She trembled indeed at this word of God, and watched it with much awe and meekness: and when in her last and painful illness, which came on in Jan. 1855, she spoke with humble awe and reverent sense of the Lord's judgments, and when the anguish almost overpowered her faculties, her fervent cry was still, 'Let patience have her perfect work,' mingled with many supplications for deliverance, I thought of the word which had long ago impressed her, 'Glorify ye the Lord in the fires' (Isa. xxiv. 15), and believe it was signally fulfilled.

She died on March 3rd, every word she could speak betokening peace without a disturbing cloud.

July 3. I preached at Edward's Place Chapel on Sunday the 24th ult., and found much refreshment. On my return to Town on Wednesday, I again found a blessing in preaching, and feel a hope that the whole of my ministering there has been a favour to myself, because I was made to believe the Lord approved it. I enjoyed also conversing with Mr. Maddy, who was in a free, tender spirit. I thought he had found benefit from reading the life of Martin Boos.

Boos was the Lord's apostle to his poor scattered sheep among the papists in Germany, a strong witness in spirit against the errors of the priests, and they confirmed his witness against themselves by their incessant opposition to him, yet by the strong hand of God they were not suffered to get rid of him.

My whole desire and prayer is that I and my hearers also should understand and experience this mighty power unto salvation. The real finding of it makes us in one sense the most exclusive of all

people, and in another the most enlarged in heart. 'There the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.'

Aug. 4. I was astonished how this word caught my attention in Isaiah ix, 'The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.' I saw from it a deep gospel mystery; how it is, and why it is, that the Lord, even though as there said, 'his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still,' complains of the legal effect of the trial in their heart, so as not to bring them to turn to him and to seek him. I do indeed hope I felt the truth in the love of it, that the Lord's judgments must cause us to flee to him in Christ; and I have rarely been conscious of more divine power in the word. However, this evening I was made ashamed of myself, when conversing with one of my poor people, who described the holy fear and trembling, the falling under the Lord's hand, 'stretched out still,' and, as she said, most justly; and the condemnation of her legal departings from Christ, and her being brought to him under all these feelings.

I afterwards saw Miss J. S., who has been very ill; and I will give a short sketch of her conversation. She said:—

'I continued many days without any deep feeling, in a kind of peace which seemed without any particularly clear ground. So I became very anxious to prove my state, and gradually was brought down to a deep feeling of my sin, and the misery of a guilty conscience. My state became most painful, and my cry vehement. This morning the change came with great power in the words—Jesus sitting on the right hand of God. I saw the truth of the scripture testimony, that he had borne the burden of sin, that he knew the misery of guilt, though for sins not his own, and that having overcome all he was now sitting at the right hand of God! Then I felt the words, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."' Here she was hardly able to proceed, on account of the overpowering grace. It was very tender, simple, and deep.

1856. *March* 25. I went to see Mrs. R.

After all that I have said of her [see the previous references to her case], the beauty has been greatly clouded over. Her weakness of mind through old age, and temptation working on it, has produced a state of irritation and suspicion, which has embittered her life during the greater part of the last two years. However, to my surprise, to-day I found her clear and tender, though very sorrowful. She spoke feelingly from this hymn,

'Poor sinner, come, cast off thy fear,' &c.,

and in reference to the Lord's past work in her, said, 'It was a true work: if ever work was true, that was true: yet you see through sin I got away from the Lord. Oh, wretch that I am!' I remarked to her that I was sure in feeling so deeply low and humbled she found a secret hope: she acknowledged she did, only that the holding on of faith through such deep darkness was very hard. She asked with feeling after the welfare of the friends.

[At another time.]

Old Mrs. R. spoke with energy and simplicity, 'Oh, that clear light that I enjoyed in time back, as clear as the sun at noon! and yet, wretch that I am, I forsook the way, and was puffed up with the great things the Lord had done for me! Still I do not deny that I have a hope, but it is faint and wavers.' She recounted many of her former mercies, and also a few of her present glimpses of hope: and when I reminded her of the words, 'The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast,' she said, 'That I do, and it is the most grievous fast I ever endured. Who can tell what it is to have that great comfort from the Lord's presence, and now to miss it, and not to be able to bring it back!'

July 2. *Sherborne, Dorset.* I found a seasonable help from Heb. iv and v, and felt thankful I had come here. Last evening I went with my son-in-law* to Longburton, and called upon his friend Mr. Thomas Small, who has preached the truth for many years in Sherborne.

He described with heart-stirring power how once on his way to preach, overwhelmed with all but despair, he stood still and said, 'Lord, I cannot go to preach to others in this dreadful state myself,' and one soft word from the Lord dissolved him like wax. It was this, 'Cast not away therefore your confidence.' He opened to Heb. x, and read, and the whole glowed in his heart and melted him to adoring love. He went on, and preached from the same word. As Luther would say, 'Would I had been there to hear.' On another occasion, after long and sore conflicts, he was enabled to make an appeal to the Lord, and to say, 'Lord, thou knowest my only hope is in Christ and his blood and righteousness! O Lord, let a word be found by me to confirm my hope!' So he prayed, as the New Testament was open before him, and his eye fell on 1 Tim. i. 1, 'By the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.' The effect was unutterable. 'Oh,' he said, 'if these hedges, trees, and fields could speak, they would witness what I have many a time felt amongst them!'

Aug. 18. Yesterday I preached from Gal. i. 3–7 and Psalm lxxxi. In the evening I felt gratitude and encouragement in remembering it was just twenty years since, as I hope I may reverently say, the Lord mercifully anointed me to preach, from the unfolding of Eccles. xi. 1–6. I now feel myself brought lower, and find a deeper cause for trembling in myself, and a clearer discernment of Christ, 'the way.' I pray God these things may yet more deeply abound. Also I desire it may please him to deliver one, who heard me on Sunday, from a legal veil, the denseness of which astonished me. He said after my evening sermon, 'My fear has been that except we escape the sins by which the people fell in the

* Mr. Charles Benson, who married Mr. Gilpin's younger daughter, and who has for many years ministered the Word of life at Norton-sub-Hamdon, to a few poor people who know its value.

wilderness, we shall fall in the wilderness too: but I perceive you begin by bringing us all in guilty of these sins, and then leading us to the mercy that rejoiceth against judgment.'

Sept. 15. I went to Ware and conversed with S. M. I said to her, 'Now when you look back upon your long trial in not being received into the church, do you regret it?' She replied, 'Oh no, I am sure, quite sure, that the hand of God was in it!' I feel the same hope myself. The Lord meekened my heart by the trial, and meekened hers. Now I perceive her spirit has lost that harsh eagerness which she formerly showed, and yet this change was so gradual that I may say it came not with observation. I supposed the day would come when she would clearly own all that I had felt in her to be wrong. The day never came; and yet she melted, and became meek in heart. This is a lesson for *me* also. I felt a humbling when I perceived the way the Lord was taking.

1857. *Jan.* 22. [*At Sutton.*] On the 19th inst. I heard from Hertford that our old friend MRS. R. was sinking, and notwithstanding her utter weakness of body and mind, had made full proof of the power of the Lord in her heart. To-day we heard again that she died on that same date, her last words being, 'Father, thy kingdom come. Thy word is sure.' For this blessed end of the painful trial which more or less has gone on in reference to her for four years, I desire unfeignedly to thank the Lord.

Feb. 28. *Bengeo.* I found much comfort in looking over and arranging some account of the whole course of Mrs. R.

My intercourse with her began in July 1834, and has extended through twenty-two and a half years. As an example of simple spiritual energy through darkness and light, through conflict and victory, I have felt, and still feel, that she was for nearly sixteen years unrivalled amongst us. I used to wonder at the greatness of her conflicts and victories, and, most of all, at the divine clearness of the manifestation of Christ's glory, which she was favoured with. After all this, the Lord, for her good and ours, permitted her to decline. She lost her tenderness and love to the brethren, and, as she has always testified since, became puffed up. Then she was gradually brought very low. Outwardly she sunk into the extremity of feeble weakness, both of body and mind: spiritually the Lord appeared to forsake her, and delivered the dearly beloved of his soul into the hands of her enemies. Through this long and severe ordeal she has been manifestly upheld and purified. She has never for one moment given up the beginning of her confidence, yet has in the lowest and most abject humiliation bemoaned the Lord's absence, till she could hardly hope he would ever return. Neither her utter weakness nor her dark desertion have hindered the eventual display of the Lord's great power in her heart before her death. She fought with all her early energy, in the spirit of adoption crying, 'Abba, Father:' and dying, left this testimony, that, whereas her own case had long led her to testify that she was unable to set her seal to the sureness of the eternal covenant, yet at last she knew it.

I believe the Lord helped me on Sunday morning. I preached from the words, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And

ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,' &c. (Heb. xii. 4-6), reading a simple memorial of all the facts of her case. In the evening I preached from the epistle to Ephesus, Rev. ii. 1-7, which I felt to be wonderfully apposite; for therein the Lord greatly commends their early faith, reproves their backsliding, and sets them for recovery in the path of bitter repentance, and remembering whence they had fallen.

The effect upon my own heart was clear and encouraging. Many who have spoken to me felt the same. For my part I bless the Lord for the whole dispensation, and find profit in every part of it.

CHAPTER XVII.

1857-1861. Sore convictions followed by a renewal of spiritual strength—Meets with a former hearer—Funeral sermon for C. A. Bauley—Hears Mr. Small, and preaches at Sherborne—Revival of his first word—The word of the promise before the law—A visit—Mr. W. Maydwell preaches for him—Happy end of old Duke—Conclusion of the year 1861.

June 14. Yesterday I felt a return of spiritual trial. I had been able to pray stedfastly through a part of the morning notwithstanding, but all seemed to set me further from hope. [Mr. Gilpin here proceeds to describe the rising of sore convictions, leading him to conclude that 'after all he was only like many of old with whom God was not well pleased;' but he continues:—] Suddenly, I knew not how, a change entered. The binding effect of the charge of guilt was loosed. I could look up and hope in Christ, and felt persuaded that he cleared my way, and was with me in the ministry. Love sprang up, and I was willing at once to be here, or at Sutton, or wherever the Lord pleased. The words 'I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes,' became sweet. I said, This I have been doing, and the Lord has heard me; and now I can say, 'Teach me.' It was one of the sweetest and most timely reliefs ever vouchsafed me. Then I prayed that I might take the above words as my morning text, and say from them whatever the Lord pleased, however disparaging to myself, but that he would give me discretion. I preached with feeling, and brought in Psalm xxxii, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' The Lord had unbound the cords of guilt; and I told them I had been favoured to feel it, but I did not enter into the nature of my convictions, for the Lord had disallowed the conclusions they were driving me to.

It was remarkable that on my way to chapel I met —— walking with a companion. I stopped him and said, 'Is the love between us gone?' He looked dejected, and after long silence faltered out,

'I hope not.' His companion made off, and left him a prisoner in my hands. As we walked together he stammered out a deep confession that he was a lost sheep indeed, yet not at home in the wilderness. I and many of us were much moved for him. I feel sure, had it not been for the change in my own tried feelings, I should have been unable to speak to him. This made me hope that the Lord was my helper. After service I again spoke to him; and found, I hope, a true spiritual tenderness in his heart*.

1858. *July 5, Monday.* I will endeavour to describe a spiritual touch it pleased the Lord to give me yesterday. I had been tried, confused, and disheartened: my state was bad, and my ministry appeared before me as all fading away. In this state I wished to preach a funeral sermon in the evening for Bauley: but the temptations prevailing up to the time I entered the pulpit, I could hardly even pitch upon a text; but at that instant resolved to speak from Luke xii. 35–38, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning,' &c. As the first hymn was being sung,

'Hail sovereign love that first began,'

a gloomy looking forward to sin and wrath was all I could call my own. I remembered John Bunyan used to feel, at times, the bondage entirely taken off him while he spoke, though it returned again before he left the pulpit. I prayed it might at least be so with me; and certainly the words of my text unfolded without effort. I was full of matter, and spoke that I might be refreshed: and having finished my sermon I took up the consideration of Bauley's case, gave a sketch of his life, his holy wars, and his death, as a sweet illustration of my whole text; and I felt that I spoke with authority.

Soon afterwards the enemy began to rivet my chains on again. It seemed as if he suggested to me, 'Your sins are of that nature that Christ does not forgive;' but I appealed to Jesus, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst.' At once I could dismiss all these unbelieving fears, and I retained a sweet feeling of spiritual hope that the Lord was for me. Ebenezer.

[After a visit to friends at Portsea and other places, Mr. Gilpin thus relates the exercises of his mind after his arrival at his son-in-law's.]

Sept. 13. *Sherborne.* Yesterday morning (Sunday) I was dark

* This circumstance relates to one who in former years seemed to show warm love, and won the affections of many in the church. Mr. Gilpin wrote respecting him in 1850: 'That he has entered into temptation, I cannot doubt. The effects of this may not be very evident at first, but we have every reason to fear that they will too soon show themselves. I am deeply concerned, not on his account only, but for the whole body. If we do not cherish the Lord's leadings, but make little of them, the Lord justly requites us by suffering them to do us little good; and so the evil increases, and we are in danger of neglecting them wholly. I fear I made too much of him, and, perhaps, through the deceit of the heart he made too much of himself. The Lord suffers me to feel ashamed and bereaved when I see how lightly he seems to be giving up the unity which he so cordially acknowledged the Lord had ordained.'

and tried, as I had been ever since I left Portsmouth, and could not believe there was anything right in my case. We went to Mr. Small's chapel. His text was Prov. x. 24, 'The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.' In the state I was my heart sunk at the words; but he handled them in a truly able manner. He was exceedingly clear, both in doctrine and experience, and bent himself to encourage the lambs. He so fed these as to quicken, not to lull them. One subject he touched upon was the faith of a truly convinced sinner, who apprehends only the judgment of God, and the threatenings of his holy law,—this faith is one with that of the happy man, who, through the aboundings of the Holy Ghost, is filled with joy and peace in believing,—the faith is the same, though the objects upon which it is fixed are different. I loved the word, and trembled at it. It awakened in me still deeper fear, so that I could hardly bear the thought of preaching in the evening. I felt I knew so little of the Lord's divine work, that I felt afraid of presumption; but I was enabled to say, I must confess all, and look only to Jesus: and, behold, a gentle spring relieved me, from Psalm xxxvii. 20, 'The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs:' my guilt consumed away from sight under these words, and left me resolved to preach from the Psalm, which I did. It was beautiful to me as I preached; and on the two words, 'The Lord loveth judgment,' and again, 'The mouth of the righteous talketh of judgment,' I told the people how I had entered into their pastor's spirit in the morning, and enforced the same things. He afterwards came to us to supper, and showed true liberty, and love. It was very uniting. This I feel as a signal mercy. It is long since I found the word clothed in such power.

Dec. 2, *Thursday. Bengeo.* Last Sunday morning I had a very dangerous fall in my study, but, through mercy, escaped further injury than bruises, and the shaking; which last was very great. I was just able to walk down to chapel, and felt the more anxious to do so because of a soft influence from the end of 2 Peter iii, especially these words, 'Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' After reading my text, however, I was obliged to leave the pulpit. Mr. W. Maydwell followed me, and spoke from my text, while I sat in the vestry. The words have, more or less, continued to dwell upon my heart. I am looking for that quickening which alone brings the diligence.

1859. *May* 24. What a mystery is my heart! It is but a few days ago that I felt faith in these words, 'He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass;' and it is as if I had since then been driven into the wilderness. Lord, have mercy upon me.

June 1, *Wednesday.* I think I found a real blessing last Sunday evening. The trouble hinted at above made my spirit impatient, as if I could not wait for the Lord. I was not delivered from this in the morning; though I longed for a 'hope in God.' But in the

evening this kind of impatience was touched and subdued by Christ's mercy, in bringing to my remembrance the soft power of this promise in the very beginning of my falling before him in Jan. 1833: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' So I preached from those words with much comfort, and was very glad to hear afterwards that some were encouraged.

June 8. I was greatly discouraged the whole of yesterday, but to-day some enlightening reflections in Psalm lxix. 13–18, 'As for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time,' &c., revived me. In this state I went out praying the Lord might direct my way.

June 10. Oh, how my own faith in the above word has been shaken! The cause of the shaking was what often troubles me, my consciousness of the slightness of what is termed a law-work in me. I was reading how different was the case of the late Mr. Blackstock, and all my hope was assaulted. But I began to pray thus: 'It is thine election, it is Christ's redemption, it is the cry of thy Spirit that avail. It is on this footing I come; not making my case plain for myself, but asking that it may be made plain, or I am undone.' Then it came with hope, The word of the promise was four hundred and thirty years before the law (see Gal. iii. 17). How the difference between the law and the gospel shines forth in that chapter! How glorious is the unchangeableness of the promise, enduring through and under the law!

[At a later date Mr. Gilpin thus describes a visit in London:—]

Business being over, I went to see one whose touching and spiritual, but very desponding letters had been sent to me. He received me most kindly, and we conversed for two or three hours. He is, I believe, one of those believers of the choicer sort, who, through the conflict of faith, are unable to maintain their confidence unbroken, but painfully lose it, only to find it again divinely restored. But it has happened with him, partly from bad teaching, that he has supposed this conflict to be the token of defective faith; and his sufferings in consequence have been extreme. Our conversation was very earnest; but whether my words were at all blessed to remove the veil from him, I do not know. Thank God, if not, it is not a blind legal veil keeping him from Christ, nor a veil of false hope or presumption; but one through which, however painfully to himself, he is made to flee to the refuge night and day. I think my visit was really acceptable to him. He said, 'It is no use telling my troubles, as I tell them to you, to my friends amongst the Plymouth Brethren; they do not enter into them, and only find fault.' When I was about to leave him he said, 'Many with a strong faith have knocked me down.' 'Mr. ——,' I replied 'I do not think St. Paul would have knocked you down.' 'No,' he added, 'nor the Lord Jesus either.' 'Well then, I think those who would knock you down want knocking down themselves.' 'Well, perhaps they do.'

1861. *Feb.* 4, *Monday*. About the beginning of the year I had

a slight attack of gout, which kept me at home for some time, through relapses; I hoped, however, by going to chapel in a fly, I should be able to take one service yesterday; but, though I began, an overpowering weakness came on, and I could not preach. I felt a stay in the words I had intended to preach from, which were these, 'Thou art good and doest good: teach me thy statutes.' It was from that gospel view (which lately it has pleased God to grant me), that all good in us so entirely comes from him, that when we feel at the worst, it is even the fittest time to ask for the best. I administered the Lord's supper with the help of Mr. W. Maydwell and Mr. Spence; after which Mr. Maydwell addressed the congregation from these words, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.' Oh, how he cut the sinews of all legal hope, and established the hope of such as are lost sinners in the gospel sense of the term!

Feb. 20. Last week I heard from my friend the Vicar of ——, and yesterday sent him a very long reply. I felt a hope that the Lord enabled me to touch several points in a way which may be profitable, but especially his having lent 'James's Anxious Enquirer' to a young man in spiritual trouble. The book by no means conveys the spirit of these words of Hart,

'Sick sinner, expect
No balm but Christ's blood;'

yet I feel, that in setting forth this testimony simply, I am compelled in a manner to 'prophesy in sackcloth.' Lord, have mercy on us both!

July 22, *Monday.* I desire to record with thankfulness that after being carried away with divers temptations for three days, and feeling yesterday in consequence very unfit to preach, I found a little stay in the morning by taking the account in the Gospels of the Syrophenician woman, and hope it was not in vain. I, however, continued tried in mind, fearing and doubting of my interest in the Lord's grace. This state was broken without hand, by the entrance of Rom. viii. 2, 3. I felt such an opening with hope and love, as led me to believe surely that by some touch virtue had entered my soul from Christ, and I preached in great liberty from the words, 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

After service, on my way to Mr. W. Maydwell's evening meeting, I called to see old DUKE, now ill. He had been at chapel in the morning, and heard me preach from the woman of Canaan, and felt it much, but he discerned the trouble I was in myself. We mingled sweetly. He told me with awe, that for a few days past clouds have gathered around him, the gospel sun only shining through a mist; and his heart, which he really believed the Lord was purging, suddenly overspread, as it were, with weeds. I never before felt such strength in Cowper's well-known words,

'Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,' &c.

His countenance kindled as I repeated them, and he said, 'Oh, how sweet that is!'

Aug. 14. I called again on old Duke, and he gave me the following account:—'I wish I could now express what my feelings were last Sunday morning as you were preaching from the words, "Ye are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God!" You remember you were led to dwell much on the death and resurrection of Christ's members with their head. While you were speaking, the Lord let down into my soul a most glorious view of Christ in his divine and human natures in one Person, and all his people one with him, and safe in him. It brought me at once to John xvii, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." I cannot set forth the glory and the security I felt; indeed it led me at once to adopt the words of the hymn,

> "More happy, but not more secure,
> The glorified spirits in heaven."

I lost the sound of your voice for some minutes while enjoying this, and longing it might abide. I said, "Lord, it is good for me to be here;" but you know the cloud soon came and covered the disciples when they were with him in the mount; and a cloud soon covered me. But oh, while the glory lasted, I cared neither to live nor to die; I was ready for either as it might please God! And though I lost the full power, I felt assured that I should find it again, and find it for ever!'

[He died on Nov. 20, having continued in a frame of solid peace ever since the above notice of him—only thirsting after more and more of Christ: and in his last moments he said his desires were 'satisfied,' and that 'all was right.']

Conclusion of the year 1861. I desire to express with thankfulness that on the whole I have reason to believe the Lord has been mercifully leading me on. I cannot but hope that the feeling which I have of my own ignorance, is sanctified to my continual looking only to the Lord for a blessing upon my ministry: for I say, and am sure it is true, 'What can *I* teach others? it must be the Lord who does all the good himself, and my own share of it is nothing.' Very often I have enjoyed an enlarging faith in the Lord's presence and mercy in my preaching. The other Sunday, (it was the day when the Prince Consort's sudden death was dwelt upon in all pulpits,) I was made very earnest to pray for something which should edify the heart, not excite the feelings. The words in Psalm lxxiii. 23–26, 'Nevertheless I am continually with thee,' &c., fell into my mind. I longed to take them, but was afraid because of their depth and compass. However, when I began to preach, all difficulty vanished; and I looked to see the condition in which the Psalmist himself found the words, for he describes it in the verse just before, 'So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.' I believe it pleased God to bless me, and my word too, that day. I desire to be thankful that in measure I have often found it so, before and since.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1862-1864. The unity of the brethren—The resurrection of the body—Some particulars of the life of Mary ——.—Conversations with a friend—Conversations with one who died at Bengeo while visiting there—Account of Nurse Galer.

May 18. Last night I found a very peculiar opening in Psalm cxxxiii, from which I spoke. Behold, (what none can see except by faith,) this great sight—Christ and his members united in one! He as the great High Priest, anointed without measure by the Holy Ghost, whose influence is as the dew upon herbs where the Lord commands spiritual life. It was no straining, no fancy which I set forth! Yet I can hardly see this great sight. Lord, anoint my eyes.

Aug. 26, *Tuesday*. Last Saturday in the prospect of preaching a funeral sermon for Miss S. E., I was unable for many hours to find a passage for a text that I could hope the Lord gave me. At last I was led to these words, 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not,' &c. All through it seemed remarkably descriptive of her case. I found much help in preaching: and in the evening from Psalm xvi, and 1 Cor. xv, when I was especially earnest to lay down the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. I did not, and never wish to speak in the pulpit philosophically; but I feel the importance of simply explaining that the identity of the raised body is not that the same particles of matter are restored to it, but that there is a real oneness of vital principle which survives this life: as the apostle says, 'Thou sowest NOT that body that shall be . . . , but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.'

[The following account is extracted from the memoir Mr. Gilpin wrote of a poor woman in whose case he had long been interested, and who died in the autumn of 1862. See the mention of her April 3, 1853:—]

Her parents lived some miles from Hertford. They were poor people, remarkable for their steadiness and honesty; and late in life the mother was called by grace likewise, as shall be noticed in its place. The mother's natural character was severe, and her conduct to Mary in early youth was far from kind. Mary, however, was very dutiful to her mother, and was not without serious convictions of sin in childhood and youth. The village schoolmaster was anxious that the children under his care should excel in singing. To stimulate them to take pains he would say, 'Come children, take pains to sing well. All the saints in heaven sing. You cannot be fit for heaven without singing!' These words, unknown to him, were keenly felt by his little pupil, who had neither voice nor ear to sing well. She feared sometimes that she could never be saved, because unable to sing.

Of course the schoolmaster had no intention of thus seriously alarming her; but I cannot think of his lightness without disapprobation.

Mary herself, in after years, considered that there was some measure of grace granted her in those early years, which enabled her to conduct herself in an exemplary manner under very trying circumstances, and which so far impressed the mother that afterwards, when grace laid hold of her own heart, she acknowledged her daughter's forbearing kindness, with self-abasing reflections on the hardness of her own heart.

But the good work became buried for a season. Mary went into service, and was gradually drawn into a worldly spirit. She married a man without the fear of God; and was unhappy in her marriage, her husband, during the whole of her subsequent life, being addicted to intemperate habits. For nearly twenty years her chief endeavour was to please him by yielding to him. She never attended public worship, though she always felt a sore conscience.

One day in Oct. 1841, while standing outside her door, with her next neighbour, she saw a funeral pass by. (It was the funeral of my own nearest relation.) She hastily said, 'Who's funeral is that?' Her neighbour replied, 'It is the funeral of Mrs. Gilpin of Bengeo.' This fell with great weight upon her spirit, and she afterwards told me, that as I passed, I turned and looked at her, and that she thought I was praying for her, which was not the case, at least not literally, for I did not know her: but I might have been inwardly praying for the flock of God. A desire was awakened in her heart to turn from her vain course of life. This was increased when she was told of the joy in the Lord with which my wife was favoured in her death; and she resolved to become my hearer herself, and was enabled to continue stedfast in this course to the end of her life. Her husband, and some lodgers in the house, did not approve of the change at all; and she went on for a week or two endeavouring to 'serve two masters.' But soon she began to find that the two would not do together. This word fell on her heart with great fear and searching, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord' (2 Cor. vi. 17), but it brought no power with it to enable her to yield obedience. This felt impotence made her heart to sink, which continued for a day or two, till the word returned with still more weight and power, 'Once more I say unto you, Come out, and be separate.' This time it brought with it the grace of gospel obedience. It brought her to turn with full purpose of heart to the Lord, and though the opposition which set in against her was painful, and continued more or less to the end of her days, it was far less harassing and more beneficial than if she had through fear continued in an irresolute spirit. The Lord kindly enabled her, in a remarkable degree, to treat her opposers in a prudent way: not to be angry or to complain of being ill-treated, but diligently to attend to household duties, to turn away wrath by a soft answer, and to meet bitterness with good humour.

From a very early period of her attending the ministry, she heard the gospel with encouragement and hope. Her early thoughts and feelings recurred to her mind with an increase of understanding and discernment. But it was some time before she felt herself satisfied; and she used to wonder how it could be that the peace of God could enter her soul. One day she found herself more than commonly drawn out in prayer and supplication;

till at last these words entered her heart with power, and set her at rest, 'I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.' She understood at once that this was the great blessing she had longed for, but hitherto had not been able to find: and from thenceforward, though very often favoured with seasons of sweet communion, she became the subject of more varied exercises and deeper conflicts. Her life also in its concluding years was very laborious, when her bodily strength was greatly impaired; so that, long before the day of dismissal, she longed earnestly for that world, where 'the wicked cease from troubling; and the weary be at rest.'

I believe that through all these outward trials, with others which were inward, spiritual life was on the whole very fully maintained in her soul; and her conversation was often cheering and encouraging to those who were fellow travellers with her to the city which hath foundations. Soon after this establishment in the faith, she gave me the following account of her attention to domestic worship: 'I have regularly maintained family prayer with my sons for some time past, but the second boy gave me much trouble; I never could get him to sit still. At last this circumstance oppressed my spirit greatly, and I found power very simply to cast my burden upon the Lord. I said, "O Lord, thou can'st work in my child; I cannot." That very afternoon the child brought me the Bible without a word being said to him, and at the usual hour for prayer came again, and, pointing to the Bible, said, "Mother, don't you want this book?" I replied, "Yes, my child," and we read and prayed together. Ever since that time he has kept listening while I have read and prayed, and sometimes says, "Mother, be sure you call me when the time comes."' This son grew up to be the comfort and support of her declining years, and manifested the true fear of God in his heart and life.

In after years the family became straitened by poverty. But as for Mary, the Lord gave her the blessings of 'the basket,' when he withheld the blessings of 'the store:' of which, out of many remarkable instances, I will narrate one. She had for some time endured much inconvenience for want of shoes. One day finding this very painful, as she was walking through Hertford, she very reverently committed this trial into the Lord's hands, and while thus engaged met a stranger, with a pair of boots nearly new in her hand, who said in passing, 'Here, good woman, if these fit you take them; they are too small for me, and I have just suited myself with new ones.' They fitted her exactly.

Her kindness to a stranger, as shown in the following account, proved a great blessing both to that stranger and to herself, for I believe the love of Christ constrained her:—

She had gone out to refresh herself by a short walk, and while walking found these words were sounded over and again in her heart, and could not tell the reason why, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.' On returning home she found a poor widow whom she knew in her youth, but had entirely lost sight of for many years, standing at her door, with her two children and a little bundle of wearing apparel, who addressing her said, 'You are the only person in Hertford I remember, and I am come from a distance of seventy miles, my husband being dead, to apply for admission into the union; for my settlement is here. I must beg for a lodging.' Mary remembered the words which had been sounded in her heart; and

agreed not only to give her a night's lodging, but to admit both mother and children into her house, till they could look about them, and find perhaps a better home than the workhouse. To contrive this she had to send two of her sons to lodge elsewhere; and her husband, recollecting who the widow was, himself helped forward the plan. The stranger continued for a day or two reserved on the subject of religion, till Mary, asking her a few questions, began to perceive she was of a kindred feeling with herself. She gladly accompanied her to Port Vale Chapel, procured employment among the friends, soon took a house of her own, and continues to reside amongst us to this day.

This kindness to others, 'especially to them who are of the household of faith,' often brought her a rich reward, as in the following account is manifest:—

She had been passing through temptations and conflicts for a considerable time. Convictions of sin, fear of death and judgment, had so invaded her soul, that she found it hard to lift up her head, and this at a time when through her own deep poverty she had been assiduous to minister to the wants of the poor and needy. At last consolation was abundantly poured out upon her through divine hope given her in these words, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.' She replied (as the following words suggested to her), 'Lord, when have I done this?' And the word was carried on, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Now she felt rich indeed, as she simply and forcibly described to me afterwards. 'Sir, it made me rich not only in soul, but in body also. It happened at a time when my husband and I could not muster one halfpenny between us; and yet the next morning, being awakened by the joy of this promise, I exclaimed, "How rich I am! aye, rich in soul, and rich in body too! I'm as rich as Squire Abel Smith of Woodhall."'

This happened not very long before the late Mr. Abel Smith's last illness and death. That he was rich in this world's wealth, was well known in the mercantile world. That the Lord, especially before the close of his life, manifestly enriched his soul with the heavenly gift of a poor and a contrite spirit, was not known so extensively. It was nevertheless true; and it made him esteem his very riches as poverty. Thus both he and the humble subject of this memoir were of one heart, as it is written, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich [brother] in that he is made low' (James i. 9, 10).

I have already intimated how her domestic life was embittered. One especial trial of this kind was overruled to bring her to so great a blessing, that it ought to be remembered to the glory of her Saviour. Her poor husband had been in a worse state than usual for several days together, till at last, the wife, under bitter temptation, became fretful and angry, and in that spirit went to the ale-house, and spoke some angry words to him. He replied only by deriding her; and she went home overpowered by grief, sorely convicted of having acted in her own spirit, and to her bitter sorrow lost all sense of the Lord's protecting care. She sat up that night in an agony of fear for her safety through her poor husband's threats. The next morning, when left alone, she felt desirous of looking for some comfort, though almost without hope of it. She

opened the Bible with a very earnest cry for mercy, and her eye was immediately caught by the word 'Hearken,' in the beginning of Isaiah li. She read on, and the whole chapter kindled in her heart as she read. 'The Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. . . . Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. . . . I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker . . . , and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?' No words can set forth the healing balm of all this in her sorely-wounded spirit: her persuasion of the Lord's unchangeable and eternal love to her was fuller and brighter than she had ever before known; and she was accustomed to call the 51st chapter of Isaiah her own chapter from that day forwards.

Her aged mother, who had not felt a mother's affection to her daughter, even for years after (as I believe) she was in a measure seeking her own salvation, became in her old age the subject of most deep and spiritual convictions of her sin. In this state she sought out her daughter, and freely confessed to her the agonies she felt in her soul. A mutual and spiritual affection sprung up between them. The mother joyfully expressed her sense of the value of her daughter's instructions, and soon afterwards died in the holy triumph of faith.

But her own days were now drawing to a close. About four months before her death she passed through deep waters in her soul. She used to describe her feelings in the words of the hymn:

'Because the gate of life
Is narrow, low, and small;
The path so prest, so close, so strait,
There seems no path at all.'

At last this trouble was swallowed up by the powerful entrance of the word, 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' She said, 'I felt that what I had been suffering under was these "wages of sin;" but, behold, the mercy came and overflowed all things. The "gift" swallowed up those dreadful wages.'

Something of the same kind happened again with her, on the last occasion at which she was able to be present at the Lord's supper. She had said, 'I could only say like Baruch in Jer. xlv, "I fainted in my sighing (by reason of my sorrow), and I find no rest;" but, behold, these words proved life from the dead to me,

"The King of heaven a feast has made;
And to his much-loved friends,
The faint, the famish'd, and the sad,
This invitation sends.

Beggars, approach my royal board," &c.'

About this time, when oppressed under the feelings of her laborious trials, these words entered her heart, 'He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.' It was accompanied, she said, with a peculiar feeling that the time of its fulfilment

was at hand. Afterwards again this word, 'Thou shalt not live, but die;' and she told her son, adding, 'I believe it will be so.' Once more the warning fell with much encouragement in these blessed words, 'The Master is come, and calleth for thee.' And at last, for several days together, sweet peace came in from these words, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' She expired in the 58th year of her age. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' Amen.

[Mr. Gilpin thus records some conversations with one whose acquaintance he had recently made at Hertford:—]

I owned him as a brother without hesitation. He is in a manner unable to see the richness of the pearl he has found: he cannot suppose that one so vile and base, so self-righteous as he feels himself to be, is really one of Christ's jewels. He told me he had noticed upon a Sunday morning many going to their respective places of worship, and apparently both serious and happy, whereas he himself, confined through bodily infirmities, seemed to be doing nothing. A voice whispered to him, 'Why standest thou all the day idle?' He replied, 'No one cares for me.' It followed, 'Go work to-day in the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give thee.' This instruction appears to have been in some measure lost for want of a spiritual ministry; and I endeavoured to improve it by assuring him that the painful and humbling exercises of his soul were his workings in the vineyard: which it revived him to hear. He said he often wakes at night desolate in the extreme: no good thought, no faith, no joy, only a destitute sinner; and he begins to pray, 'O Lord, I can do nothing, wilt thou be pleased to look upon me?' Sometimes in a moment joy and love fill his heart. But all leaves him presently, and he is quite as bad as before. I perceived he can hardly understand that this is good, and according to the word that we know neither the coming nor the going of that divine wind which 'bloweth where it listeth.' I concluded by repeating Psalm cxxxiii, touching upon the brethren, their unity, Christ the High Priest, and the ointment to be found even in the hem of his garment. 'Oh,' he said, 'that's all! May I but touch him.'

1863. *Jan.* 26. He [the same friend] gave a striking description of the darkness and despairing feelings with which he had retired one night to rest. 'Yet,' said he, 'I did say, O Lord, if thou canst stoop so low as to notice such a worm as I am, have mercy on me: and so I prayed till I fell asleep. When I awoke an indescribable change came over me, to hope, to believe, to love. I knew it must be the Lord; indeed I seemed to hear the words, "It is I, be not afraid." I replied, "No, I am not frightened." My wife said, "Who are you talking to?" I replied, "I am feeling what I never felt before." I was afraid to stir lest I should lose the comfort. Oh, what a change had taken place in the pillows! I could now commit myself to Christ in peace, and lay me down and sleep indeed. In the morning they brought me breakfast: I wished to be still alone, for I feared lest by a look, my soul should be diverted from the Lord. The doctor came in, and I said, "I am better: I think I shall get over my illness now." "Indeed," said he, "what makes you think so?" "I cannot tell you, I can only say I have felt the peace of God in my soul." He replied, "Have you not been lightheaded?" I answered, "No, sir, nor am I now."'

When he had thus spoken, I asked him whether the change had not been attended with a further light in the word? He said, 'Yes: I cannot tell you how beautiful the miracles and parables of our Lord have become to me. The one thing I desire now is to find more of Christ. Christ is all I want.'

[The following notes are extracted from Mr. Gilpin's memorials of his conversations with a lady who came to Bengeo for change of air, and died a few months after:—]

I found her (March 3, 1863) suffering from a fatal disease which had already made a fearful progress. From an early period of its coming on she seems to have been treated with much skill and judgment; so that her sufferings were moderated beyond what is usual in such cases. I shall not again refer to her bodily state, which continued to be one of distressing anguish. I the rather refrain from further mention of it, because she never, unless asked, spoke of it herself; never complained, nor in the least degree fretted, during my interviews with her, but showed throughout a very tender patience. She often used to say, 'This patience is what I have long prayed for. When first the disorder showed itself I foresaw what it would prove, deep suffering, and death in the end. I always had an inward hope that the affliction was a blessing sent in love; so I prayed to be quiet under it, and thank the Lord I have been so.'

She spoke to this effect to me at my first interview, so that the gentle fixedness of her spirit invited me to question her tenderly as to the state of her soul. She told me she had long known that salvation is the Lord's gift, and that the faith which brings it is his gift also; and that she longed to find in herself the same blessed hope in which her father had died before her; and also a sister, who after long distress of soul had been made exceedingly happy just before her departure. She said that even from childhood she had been made afraid of professing what she did not feel; and that she had gone through many inward exercises of mind for years, without mentioning them to any one; but she had never felt either overwhelming convictions on the one hand, nor on the other hand, that deliverance and liberty of soul, which many, (as for example her own father,) had clearly found.

'But are you not,' I said, 'praying for faith and salvation?' 'Yes,' she replied, 'I am praying, and find that I cannot help praying: for Christ's word says, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Sometimes I lie as it were dead, but this state alarms me.' I replied, 'Have you never felt what you believe to be a distinct hope from the Lord in your heart, to cheer and encourage you to go on seeking?' She replied very firmly, 'I have found such a hope once, some years back, in a time of deep trouble. I believed it was from God: indeed for the minute it lasted I could not have doubted it. It immediately vanished, and has never revived again with the same power, yet I never have given it up. It came with these words, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love."' I replied, 'Then you cannot say with the elder brother in the parable, "Thou never gavest me a kid," &c., for the Lord has given you a kid, and moreover told you in the first chapter of the Song of Solomon what you must do with your kids, "Feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents."'

Soon afterwards I found her in a tender spirit of longing and prayer that the Lord would loose her bonds. 'I have,' she said, 'no time to lose. I am sinking fast, and know I must find peace from the Lord: and nothing else can satisfy me.' I always found in her words a spirit of light and love, whether she described darkness and gloom or the dawnings of a brighter day, which often softened and encouraged my own spirit; especially once, when her words led me to preach on Matt. xxvii. 50, 51, 'Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.'

The main feature in her case was the reverence and diligence with which, as far as her strength allowed, she read the word with prayer by day, and meditated on it with prayer by night. I give a few examples of this.

One morning soon after I had commenced visiting her she said, 'Where are the words, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" for, for several days I have felt them to come with some power, and with a persuasion that there is something in the chapter containing them for my profit?' I then read to her the chapter (Isa. xxi), observing from it that it contains many things which in their literal meaning are not plain; but which we need not perplex ourselves about, when our object is to find spiritual instruction, which abounds in many parts of it, as in the passage named above. 'For yours,' (I said, and I believe it was given me to say,) 'has been a long night; and you are ready to say, Watchman, what of the night? and to repeat the question, Watchman, what of the night? Now the answer follows, "The morning cometh, and also the night." There are the dawnings of light and hope, and of the rising of the morning in your case; but the Lord says, There shall be darkness as well as light; as the light keeps coming, darkness will also come. In all this affliction he still adds the words in the end of the verse, "If ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come."' She replied, 'Here is an invitation to me to keep on praying: no word in all the Bible against a poor sinner going on praying. I am to enquire—to return—and to come.' It appeared to me that this passage of scripture was felt by her as a watchword, to stir up her soul in prayer, to the end of her days.

A week later she said, 'I was brought very low after your last visit, and the enemy sounded in my heart, "Give all up, expect no more. There's no help for you!" But the Lord spoke powerfully, "Arise thou sleeper, and call upon thy God!" Then followed these words, "By terrible things in righteousness will I deal with thee." It brought me to fear that greater trouble awaited me, yet I could not help taking comfort from it, for I said, "If the Lord had given me up he would not have spoken to me at all."'

She found a like instruction from many other words of scripture, some presenting themselves to her in her silent watches at night, and others laying hold of her when engaged in reading. The principal of these were Isaiah xliii. 2, lvii. 15–21, Mal. iii. 1, and iv. 2; and very frequently clauses out of Psalm xxiii, especially the opening words, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' which day by day seemed to revive her with fresh dew. When any of these had been once felt, she used to employ herself in meditation upon them, often repeating them, as feeling them to be treasures which she could not part with. On one occasion when I asked

her how she had felt herself on the preceding day, which was the Lord's day; she replied, 'I was impressed again with the words from Malachi I had felt before, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple;" and afterwards I read Isaiah xxv. How often I had read it before, but never felt it as I did now. "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," &c. Reading it made me say, Then *my face* will come in there, for the Lord says the veil shall be taken from all faces; and his word will never go back. You know how I have felt the veil to be spread over me; but now I see the veil shall be taken away. I shall find it so, though perhaps at the eleventh hour and the half, yet I shall find it. But it is the Lord's power I must find; and where is his power except he comes and does it for me? How many little things I have found since I have been lying here; and it is by these little things that the Lord leads us on. It is no use thinking that we can get on in any other way.'

She often referred with deep feeling to the words which had first encouraged her hope, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love:' and a day or two before her death she found something like it again, in the application of Isaiah xliii. 1, 'Fear not; for I have redeemed thee.' The power, she said, continued in its fulness only a few minutes, but reminded her of what she had once found before. She added, 'It kindled in me love and praise to the name of the Lord, whose mercy endureth for ever, and by this I know it was no false light from Satan. Though it only lasted a few minutes it renewed my hope that I shall find the veil fully removed before I die: perhaps only a few minutes before the end. At such moments as these pain is dead.'

I read to her the epistle to the church in Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 7–13). She was greatly enfeebled in body, but replied, 'These words encourage me: they only had a little, but they valued what they had; and the Lord said to them, Let no man take thy crown.'

In my last visit she referred again to the words, 'Watchman, what of the night?' &c.; adding, 'Those words have come into my mind over and over again with a persuasion that there was something in them which should profit my soul. And truly it has been so.'

This was the close of her conference with me. I should have rejoiced to have witnessed, what her conversation and spirit often led me to expect, and what I believe surely took place, the breaking of all her bonds and the fulness of mercy satisfying her soul, but I hope we may always remember that the Lord 'doeth all things well.' Soon after the above she became worse, and remained almost without any movement for many hours. About two in the morning she said several times over, what the nurse had never heard her say before, and what I believe she would never have said without an inward assurance of Christ's love, 'Come, Lord Jesus! Dear Lord Jesus! come and take me home.' She became silent again; and expired about six in the morning of Wednesday, June 3, aged 66.

[One more account must conclude this chapter—that of an Infirmary nurse, to whom reference was made on June 8, 1850:—]

Account of Nurse Galer.

She was a native of Twywell in Northamptonshire, and came to Hertford as servant to an invalid lady, being at that time about fifty years old. She had previously lost her husband and her two children; and was, as she believed, without a single relation living. Her mistress, finding her valuable qualifications as a nurse, recommended her to the Infirmary, where she continued head nurse till her strength, and especially her eyesight, failed. Having given great satisfaction, the county gentlemen liberally subscribed, and purchased for her a government annuity of a shilling a day, which afforded her a comfortable maintenance till her death in 1864, at the advanced age of eighty-seven.

Her conduct from the time she became known in Hertford was very exemplary; and she showed much regard for religion, but her notions respecting it were very confused for many years. The only thing I can remember worth noticing on this subject is, that she would say she had at a very early period felt her own ignorance painfully, and had prayed for light and instruction; and found support from an occasional gleam of hope that her prayer would be answered.

She appears to have had a conviction that she should find what she desired by attaching herself to the ministry at Port Vale Chapel; but it was long before she resolved to act accordingly. On her first visit to see the chapel, she slipped down some steps and fell on the pavement; which she would often say she regarded as an emblem of that deep spiritual falling which she felt she must shortly expect. Indeed there were occasional touches of this deep falling in her spirit, from an early period of my acquaintance with her. I remember once she followed me into the vestry, and said she had so deep a feeling of her sinfulness that she could do nothing but confess it and cry for mercy. The thought passed through my mind, Perhaps while you are weeping the angels are rejoicing over you. About a year afterwards she said to me, 'I never understood anything of religion before I settled here; and my first word of encouragement was, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." By degrees I began to understand that word "sure." After a time I felt another encouraging word, "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable." Also about three months ago, the Lord seemed to draw nigh while I was in my little room, and made me feel his love and lay hold of his mercy. Through all this I have felt my sin deeply. Last night you said from the pulpit, "Is your conscience polluted? Jesus is your righteousness." To be sure, I thought, that is the way, plain enough; I have no righteousness, and Jesus gives me his. How I have puzzled to know how I, being unrighteous, can ever be righteous. But this is the plain way.' Some time later she received fuller consolation. She said, 'It was no word that entered my heart, but the power of the love of Jesus. I kept saying, This is the Light of Life! This is the Light of Life! I never felt the like before, but I did feel it then: though I am nothing—nothing at all.'

Though these gleams of mercy were very confirming, yet there was evidently something which kept her case from being transparent. There was a measure of reserve which sometimes excited suspicions in those who knew her best. I observed also that she seemed gradually to be drifting into deeper waters. About this time she described

feeling much consolation from these words, 'A new and living way.' The words, as they occur in their connection, in Heb. x. 19–22, were in consequence deeply contemplated by her, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . .. . let us draw near with a true heart,' &c.

For about a year longer, her trouble, though thus at times relieved, became evidently deeper, till at last I looked upon her as one thoroughly laid hold of by the mighty hand of God, and nothing left for her but the fulfilling of the exhortation, 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.' Now, as it is said in Psalm cvii. 27 (see margin), 'All her wisdom was swallowed up,' she came into deep mire where there was no standing. At last, but not without a deep struggle, she sent for me, and confessed the sins of her earliest years. As she had always appeared remarkably blameless, there had not been any suspicion of anything having been wrong in her outward conduct. This, however, she honestly and fully acknowledged; and having evidently told me all, finished by firmly adding, 'That's all.' She was aware that in a general way she was not called upon to confess to men, sins not affecting them, and committed in the days of her ignorance: but the thought of being considered an outwardly blameless and religious person, without owning her especial guiltiness, brought her, (I will add, by the grace of God,) to make this truthful disclosure. Having heard it, I advised her to abstain from mentioning these things to others; and as far as I know she complied with my advice.

The effect of this was exceedingly relieving to her own mind. She was not like Saul when he said, 'I have sinned; yet honour me:' but like David when he said, 'I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.' This fully removed her reserve. Nevertheless it was a long time before she attained the full spiritual healing. About a year afterwards I was myself in a tried state of mind, upheld by a little hope, and it seemed to me that the Lord blest my efforts to reach the case of this lost sheep. She was brought into a solid frame, describing in few words her bitter cry, 'O let not the pit shut her mouth upon me!' and her conviction that her sins deserved the wrath of God. As I commented on the words, 'By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water' (Zech. ix. 11), I was refreshed for myself and for her also; I exhorted her to cry for a clear sense of mercy. This, in due time, she found indeed. After long waiting and prayer, this word entered and set her on the Rock, and filled her soul with love, 'I am married unto thee' (Jer. iii. 14). She became like an empty vessel, coming to Christ continually for supply out of his fulness; her deep feeling being according to this word, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.'

One day she said, 'The Lord spoke these words to me, "I have found a ransom." He said no more, but it made me remember how often these words had encouraged me. A day or two afterwards, when very low, he spoke to me kindly and said, "Remember the joy which shall follow." But oh! this morning David's words were fulfilled in me, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The Lord repeated the words, "I am married unto thee;" adding, "You love the sincere milk of the word." But little did I expect the gracious words which next

followed, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." I shall never be able to describe the blessedness I then felt! It brought me to reflect on that great multitude which no man can number, who had washed their robes in the blood of the lamb; and I felt sure I should be one of them very soon.'

This hope was remarkably revived after a severe trial of her faith in July 1860. She addressed me thus: 'One said to me, "Why are you so fearful when you know the Lord is on your side?" I replied, "I cannot help it, I must have a surer testimony than man's word." Towards morning I just said these words, O Lord Jesus Christ! Thou canst save me even now: but I am clean lost—and there's an end of it! Oh, but then he came in, and repeated the word, "I know the thoughts I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end!"'

I recollect there was one more especial application of the word to her soul, which was also frequently renewed during her declining years. The words were, 'Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.' These passages proved as an anchor sure and stedfast in her heart; and kept her firm, though by no means in a state of spiritual ease, but rather of conflict, in which she often sunk low, till one or other of them revived with power within her. At last she became exceedingly feeble in body, through gradual decay, and suffered intense pain for about three weeks before her release. The firmness and clearness of her mind seemed unbroken to the last. Though her natural character was quick and irritable, her patience through her illness was manifest, and she would often say to this effect, 'Who am I, being a worse sinner than any, yet having found mercy, that I should find fault with others, or be impatient under my sufferings!' When put in mind of the prayer, 'Forgive us, as we forgive;' she replied, 'That's it! Oh, that forgiveness, how deep it is, and how deeply the Lord works it!' Amidst her broken words, those familiar with her could often trace the state of her mind, as I did when I heard her say, 'One said to me that I had been in deep waters. Ah! I know what that means. But oh, how I have cried to Christ!' When I quoted passages of scripture to her, she replied, 'Now again! Now again! Have you no more?' And then she repeated them over slowly. One was this, 'His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.' She replied earnestly, 'Jesus is my shield and buckler!' At one of my last visits she said, 'How shall it be known when I am gone, where I have gone?' I replied that she was one of Christ's beggars, and Christ has told us what becomes of his beggars. 'It came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' She paused, and then said, 'Thank you! Thank you! Now good night.' She expired January 25th, 1864.

I preached a funeral sermon for her from Psalm xxxii. 3-5, 'When I kept silence,' &c. I said in the conclusion of my discourse, she was a signal example of the efficacy of that humiliation which the text most feelingly describes. About twelve years ago, it might be said of her, as it is said of a great penitent of old (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12), she humbled herself greatly before the God of her fathers; and ever since, that she prospered greatly in her soul: and though subject to many changes to the end

of her days, I believe it may be truly said of her that she knew in whom she had believed. She knew she was one of those favoured ones who, in their united capacity, are called, 'The bride, the Lamb's wife;' that the Lord's thoughts towards her were thoughts of peace and not of evil; and that the Sun of righteousness should arise upon her with healing in his wings.

CHAPTER XIX.

1864-1867. Death of his oldest ministerial friends—Visit to Sutton—Spiritual trials and reliefs—Notices of five happy deaths—Charles Stocks—Mrs. Stocks—Death of his sister Matilda at Pulverbach—Some account of her.

Feb. 18, *Thursday.* On Monday I was informed that my dear friend Miss J. S. was very ill, and requested to see me. I went accordingly, and found her very near her end. She said she was very glad to see me, and would have been glad to have conversed with me the day before (Sunday), 'that you,' she added, 'might both have prayed for me and praised for me; for I have felt the power of this word, "I am the resurrection, and the life."' She afterwards told me that her illness was so overpowering she could converse no longer, but hoped to see me the next day. 'And now,' she added, 'pray with me.' I did so, and felt much awe and power, for the little she had said had penetrated my heart; and it gave me an inward strength which abode with me at the prayer-meeting. I looked forward eagerly to my expected visit the next morning, but it pleased God that she should not see another morning, expiring at half-past two A. M. on Tuesday, Feb. 16.

Thus it has pleased God to remove one of my oldest and most esteemed ministerial friends, who from the first till now has been a labourer with me in the gospel—one possessing much strength of mind, and the subject of a most blessed divine teaching. All who really knew her, and also knew the truth, esteemed her highly *.

1865. *June* 6. Yesterday, at ten minutes to twelve at noon, died my dear and valued friend W. Maydwell †. His bodily weakness was for very long extremely painful. His spiritual prosperity through all was great. Though (as long before) the subject of severe temptations, they were all subdued from day to day. The sweetness of his words after the passing by of the storms, the fervour of his love, and the vigorous actings of his tried faith were almost unutterable. His conversation full of power, his love and humility most touching. About midnight, on the night before his death, he conversed upon the 23rd Psalm, which he said most fully comforted

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* See previous references to the same friend, diary, April 8, 1848, and Aug. 4, 1855.

† See Memoir of William Maydwell compiled by Mr. Gilpin. Stephen Austin, Hertford.

his spirit. He dwelt with great emphasis on the clause, 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.'

[About this time Mr. Gilpin became deeply interested in the case of Arthur Turk, a young man in a decline, whom he had received into his own home; having formerly been acquainted with his godly mother. There was reason to believe that the kind providence of God directed this step, and a blessing followed it; for, after giving many encouraging tokens of a work of grace, his young friend died in the faith, Sept. 18.]

Oct. 5, *Thursday. Sutton Coldfield.* On Tuesday we set off for this place, which we reached about two o'clock. I was very low in mind, but driven by this to prayer as we travelled. I thought I should be abandoned to myself, and have no word of comfort for the poor sheep. But at last I felt a spring in this, 'Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.' This increased after I was left alone in my room.

Oct. 11. [After visiting some of the flock.] I felt a minister's heart to revive in me. I thank the Lord for an enlightening touch after a period of darkness. It has led me to believe afresh I am, through grace, his servant. O increase the light, Lord, and suffer me not to 'let thee go.' The words which helped me in this light were these, 'I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake.' They are very serious, but deeply loving words,—the fulfilment of them kindles love.

Oct. 13, *Friday.* When Mr. Giles* met me on Saturday last I was in a dark and bound condition, and could not enjoy communion with him. This morning I wrote to him, feeling liberty to invite him to preach on Sunday morning. I then left home with my letter in my pocket, and heard in the town that Mr. Giles would be at my house before my return. I found power to pray that the Lord, for his people's sake, would grant the spirit of unity. In this frame I met him, and he remained with us till after tea time, and during the whole time there was the freest and most uniting conversation between us; and he gladly undertakes to preach on Sunday morning, and join in the celebration of the Lord's supper. This seems to be a step gained in promoting his ministry here, for which I feel thankful; and grateful to the Lord for hearing my prayer in the morning and granting to us a flowing of spiritual love.

1866. *Jan.* 1. *Bengeo.* Yesterday I preached from these words, 'Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. iii. 18), which was a suitable word for the end of the year. In my service I returned thanks for five happy deaths, which have occurred in our little community during the past year. The first was Mr. Maydwell, who died glorifying God. The second was Arthur Turk, who (alluding to Rutherford's last words) said,

* An aged minister, for a few years pastor of Maney Chapel. He died in peace, Aug. 1869.

'It is worth dying seven deaths to feel as I do.' The third, Miss Sarah Grimes, who said, 'I am so full of the peace of God that I have room for nothing else.' The fourth was Mrs. Bennett, who in her extreme weakness sung 'Alleluia!' till her voice failed. The fifth was Mrs. Boswell, eminently one of the 'poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him.'

April 22, *Sunday*. I have been conscious several times lately of peculiar trial in preparing for preaching. On Friday last I can only compare it to looking on my sermon as a thing that is not and cannot be, till just before I had to enter the pulpit. The same I felt to-day, being pressed to find subjects suitable for our present affliction. At last the words, 'The foundation of God standeth sure' (2 Tim. ii. 19), seemed all I wanted, and I preached from them without the slightest confusion. It was the same in the evening, when my subject was Psalm cxiii. 4–9. The gospel shone in it gloriously. This is what the Lord is doing:—he is humbling himself, from the throne of heaven to the cross, to raise up sinners from the dust and from the dunghill.

June 23, *Saturday*. Yesterday evening, having been greatly plagued and overcome by temptations, I felt encouraged to take up the second part of a text I had before preached from. It was now, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' After service one of my hearers came into the vestry, and told me how exceedingly she had felt the power of the word; how temptation to enmity had prevailed, but the Lord had granted her the victory. Oh, that I could render unto the Lord according to his benefits, in thus granting me a word in season to his poor tried members!

I find that my dear disciple, CHARLES STOCKS, expired last night about ten minutes before ten. He had been sensible to the last, and, though nearly unable to speak, had said, 'All is right—I am happy.' In the morning he had with difficulty found his favourite chapter, the 10th of John, and given it to his wife to read to him. He had expressed great comfort in Psalm xl, 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.' Also he had found the Lord's prayer, and enjoyed it much.

[Subjoined are a few extracts from the diary respecting him.]

May 10. I went for the second time to see Mrs. Stocks's eldest son, who is dying in a decline in his mother's house. Mr. Spence had seen him last Sunday, and was led to hope there was the real awakening in him. He said he had been cast down by religious people telling him he must exercise a firm faith, whereas he feels none at all; and he added, 'How much I have to do!' 'No,' replied Mr. Spence, 'nothing at all to do—Christ must do all in you.' He appeared to understand this in the right way, and to have been encouraged to great earnestness and watchfulness in consequence. This word had quite arrested him, 'A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.' Also he had felt reproof in this word, 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' To-day his meekness and fervency quite surprised me, and I found power to speak to him very fully.

June 11. A day or two after what I have written, he found these words in John x, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.' He was deeply arrested, and told me that he could not describe the effect of them as pointing to himself as one of those sheep. Yesterday my son-in-law and I saw him, and we both agreed that we had never seen a more impressive sight. He was very feeble through illness, but clear from all delirium, yet in the lowest depths of spiritual conflict. He thought he was in despair, but he was not; such was the keenness of the searching in his heart. 'Oh, what a sinner I have been!' I have endeavoured to deceive God, but now I find he sees through all, and I cannot deceive him. I used to deny the existence of hell, but now I am in it. Will Jesus save me out of hell!' He seemed at times to feel a faint hope, especially once, when, after insisting upon his grievous sin of deceiving God (by which he evidently meant to refer to his own efforts to be good), he forcibly added, 'But,—I have confessed it all.' There was a humble subduedness of feeling in all this deep anguish, and a stedfast endeavour to look off self to Jesus, which riveted our hearts much. All could hope for him, but he could not hope for himself. The next morning his captivity was turned, and we found him truly and solidly happy. 'All manner of sin! every kind of sin! all my sins entirely! all forgiven, all put away!' After this he said to his mother, 'One was with me all night, and kept putting my fears away.' To me he added, 'As I walk on I feel the assurance within.'

July 23. Mrs. Stocks has been much burdened during her son's illness, but the meekness and humility of her spirit is blessed. She says, 'I could not have supposed that in so short a time he could have been brought to such assurance, but it was the will of the Lord, and he brought him here to do it. How far I seem from his assurance! Lord, have mercy on me: but I have a very bad heart; while I pray God's will be done, I feel my own will working.' How clearly the apostle points out the same state, where he says, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me.'

[Mr. Gilpin had known MRS. STOCKS since the year 1845, when she was left a widow, in needy circumstances, with seven children. Her husband had for some years endeavoured to make a living by dealing in coal; and she, afterwards finding help conspicuously granted to her, continued to carry on the business to the end of her life. Subjoined are some earlier extracts from the diary respecting her.]

April 27, 1846. We went to see Mrs. Stocks. Here I was quite surprised: she spoke with the most feeling power of the spiritually broken heart. She told me that she had felt the sting of her sins most deeply very soon after her husband's death, and had I not called and rather encouraged her, she does not know what she should have done. At last the Lord deepened her conviction, and at the same time upheld her by the very powerful application of Isaiah lix, 'Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' This chapter had ever since kept coming to her with fresh keenness, and then with fresh hope. I said, 'Mrs. Stocks, why did you never tell me this?' 'Oh, sir,'

she said, 'I was ashamed to tell you. If you read that chapter you will see what the Lord says: oh, how it showed me my wicked ways!' 'Have you not seen any of our friends?' 'No, sir, how can I expect that, you see there are none so bad as I?' I replied, 'I, and I think my nephew here, will both dispute that point with you.' 'No, sir, not dispute it with me; it is so clear that I am the worst; the Lord showed it me out of that chapter. But how shall I thank him enough for bearing with me notwithstanding. How I have got on in my business since I was left a widow! How he helps me through, while I am going about to the London markets, and I have more on my hands than I can get through! How he helps me to keep praying and begging his help, and he gives it me! And he gives me such a hope that I shall be saved!' 'Mrs. Stocks, you will not at all times feel this blessed help sensibly.' 'No, sir, I do not. Last week I suddenly lost it. I went about like a lost woman seeking the Lord. I said, Now I have nothing to do but to put myself down and beg for his mercy: and he returned with the same words, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save!"'

June 13. I went to see Mrs. Stocks, who is now in turbid waters. She described a very deep power of conviction, a very spiritual brokenness of heart, especially shame on account of the sin of her heart and nature. She is also exposed to very great trial in her business, which so works disquietude, that her prayer day and night is, 'Lord, have mercy upon me a poor sinner,' yet to her this does not seem prayer, because she finds such continual rising of unbelief. She said these things pressed most heavily last Sunday night, and in the morning she waked with the words, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.' This so encouraged her that she set off for London, and found most unexpected success and help in her business. I thought because the waters were now turbid she was in danger, and said to her, 'I believe the Lord ordered your steps, yet now I beg you to entreat him for a more spiritual mind that you may not bury those sweet promises in a coal pit.' She replied, 'Oh, how glad I am you came to see me!'

June 24. Mrs. Stocks was ill. She said, 'The Lord sent the trouble because I had not fully obeyed the word, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." I found power to do so, and have been made very earnest indeed. Hart's hymn, "Prayer was appointed to convey," &c., has been unutterably sweet to me this day.'

Nov. 19. Mrs. Stocks gave me an account of her exercises in business, the guilt she contracted, and the earnest supplication she made to Christ in consequence. Going up to Town full of care and sorrow, she read, as her custom is, in the word, and Heb. xiii most sweetly fell into her heart, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness . . . , for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Under this influence she went about, not making her own cause good, and that day prospered astonishingly.

March 26, 1847. I called on Mrs. Stocks, and asked her how she felt about joining the church. She told me she could not yet see her way clear, for after much crying she had been answered in a word she did not fully understand, but thought it meant, Wait till more be unfolded. The word was this, 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.' Her spirit was so very clear, modest, and

simple, that I believe the words were sent to encourage her, and to check her being in a hurry about anything.

April 17. To-day Mrs. Stocks described a most blessed fight and victory. She was 'left alone' like Jacob. Her sins came to mind, and the burden became intolerable while she cried for deliverance for several hours, and at last the distinct power of these words (she knew not where they were) filled her spirit. 'Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works' (Eccles. ix. 7). 'O Lord,' she cried out, 'let it be thy truth, suffer not my heart to be filled with falsehood.' But he answered, 'Believe;' and truly she was enabled to do so, and her cup ran over—the blessing was greater than she could find room for. It was a full deliverance. I said to her, 'Does it now clear your way to the Lord's table?' 'I think so indeed,' she said.

May 8. How reproved I felt when our new member gave me the account of her state last Sunday. She had felt sweetly the Ordinance, and afterwards had a quiet and most spiritual season in reading John xix, which she could not get through because of the sympathy she felt with Christ in his sufferings.

Aug. 10. Mrs. Stocks was in a blessed frame, and related a few instances of the help she had lately received in her business, and the way she attained to those helps, so as quite to attract my heart. She is always brought very low beforehand, almost to give all up, but makes great use of the prayer, 'O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me;' and has found some sweet answers to it. Three weeks ago she was in great difficulties because her customers paid her nothing. I told her how Mr. Burrell once prevailed with the Lord, and then with men, when a noble lady, who was notorious for paying nobody, owed him £80. This had encouraged her greatly; and though she had found it very hard to draw near the Lord to ask him, yet at last, to her astonishment, she prevailed. One person who owed her about £70, and was very slack in paying, sent her two £30 bills. She had found it needful to get an additional horse, and the dealer had recommended her to get one of a certain person for £30. In asking about it she said to this person, 'Will you give me an order for coal?' He mentioned this to the dealer, saying, 'I don't want to sell her the horse, she wants to pay me in coal.' She went to him with £30, and making the same request as she was poor and had a large family, he said, 'No; take the horse, or leave it. I don't want your coal.' 'Well, sir,' said she, 'here's the money,' laying it down. Upon which he replied, 'I'll deal with you, and you may send me in 70 tons of coal.' When she related this to the dealer, he said (though a man of no religion), 'I'm glad of it: I see how it is; you put your trust in God.'

She described very forcibly the confusion of her heart in praying, 'I know not what to pray for: my heart is filled with twenty wishes, but not one of these I dare pray for. At last the Lord comes, and shows me the right way; then I could crush myself into the ground in thanking him.'

Oct. 14. I called yesterday to see Mrs. Stocks, and she gave me an account of the manner in which she had wrestled with the Lord and prevailed in an outward matter, which had been made a true spiritual trial, having throughout sought first the kingdom in it (Matt. vi. 33). The matter was that she had for a long time required an additional barge for

her increasing custom in the draught of coal, and the expense seemed to her so formidable as almost to forbid the thoughts of getting one. She was at first advised to borrow £60 to help her, and went to a wealthy merchant for that purpose, but upon his declining on the ground that she had no property to offer as a security, she feared that her going to ask had displeased the Lord, and gave up all thoughts of borrowing. She laboured in prayer day and night for the Lord to grant his blessing. At last the word came, 'Knock, and it shall be opened.' She replied, 'Lord, I have knocked, and perhaps knocked amiss: now, at thy word, I will knock again.' Her prayers became more earnest, not only for success, but also that if it pleased the Lord to grant her success, he would keep her from being puffed up. Hope by degrees broke in: her custom increased: she went about with her bills, and found people willing to pay them. The owner of a good barge at Stortford wrote to her, being about to sell. She sent her man to see it, and he gave a favourable report. The owner was willing without delay, for £15 extra, to enlarge it considerably, and all the money came in, which was £100. The man being in want of the money, made no delay; and when he called for it, all was ready. The barge was in excellent condition; and that day it had gone to London for a load of coal. But oh, with what godly fear and grateful love she recounted all these things, adding, 'We have a jealous God to deal with. I have suffered before now after his merciful favours, for taking credit to myself. Now is there a great work before me, to pray I may be kept humble, that my way may be kept open, and that enough for my need may still keep coming in, so that I may contract no debts.'

Aug. 24, 1849. I went out in the evening and visited several whom I thought would be in fear of the cholera. Mrs. Stocks, whose brother-in-law just opposite had died after ten hours' illness, gave me a sweet account of the peace and hope in which she had been preserved. Her fears had run high, in which state she had lighted on the book of Joel, and found a sweet entrance into it, after all the withering there described, in these words, 'Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?' She prayed she knew not how, nor for what, but that the Lord would have mercy: and afterwards in her household work found every fear gone, and her heart melted in praise and thanksgiving. She said to herself, How could this change come! Then she remembered her prayer. And I told her the praise was the offering the Lord left behind*.

* From this date Mr. Gilpin makes little mention of Mrs. Stocks. She survived him nearly two years. During her last illness, she showed an earnest longing for a fresh manifestation of the love of God to her soul; for she did not feel fully willing to give up all, and even life itself, into his hands; and now her sins appeared a grievous burden to her. But on the 11th Nov. 1872 she told Mr. Spence that she had found sweetness in God's word, and that this portion had encouraged her, 'Though your sins be as scarlet,' &c. Mr. Spence writes, 'She asked me to pray, in which I found great liberty; and when I had done she continued the prayer, using the simplest words suitable for a little child in the spiritual kingdom, such as these, "Lord, look down upon me, and teach me how to live, and how to die." She expressed some fears as to her end, but the quiet stedfastness of her spirit in looking to the Lord made me feel confident that all would be well.'

Respecting his visits with her, Mr. W. Benson also writes: 'After telling me how she desired to fall willingly into the Lord's hands for life or for death, and how she hoped to be able to see all the friends and tell them how great are the Lord's mercies,

1867. *March* 16. On the 14th inst., at two P. M., my dear sister Matilda died at Pulverbach, aged 76. She was greatly tried, but came off more than conqueror. I have this day been visiting many in the prospect of leaving for Pulverbach on the 18th.

April 8. I will go back a little and notice a few circumstances of my late journeyings. It was on the 18th ult. that I went to Pulverbach. It was snowing all day, but I was mostly alone and enjoyed the retreat. The passage from Shrewsbury was rendered difficult by the deep snow drifts. . . . The next morning I saw the remains of my dear departed sister. Her deep and purifying trials seemed to me to have been brought to a full end as she spoke the following words in holy awe and confidence, 'Glory, glory, glory, to Father, Son, and Spirit. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes—in dust and ashes.' She then called for a Testament, and touched the words, 'Come, Lord Jesus;' saying, 'Come! come!' and at last, 'Praise him! Heaven!' and so died.

On the evening of the funeral I preached in my son-in-law's meeting, and on the Sunday following twice. The morning's discourse I felt most, on the words, 'Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased'

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she turned her head aside, and clasped her hands, and poured out her heart in most fervent prayer, "Lord, do have mercy! Do be with me! Do keep me! Oh, to be safe in him—to be really safe! Let me not be deceived! Let me not be shut out! Let not the enemy prevail against me!

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!"

'As the end approached, many times after earnestly praying, overcome by weakness, she would stop, and say, "Lord, help me!" and then add, "The peace of God that passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ," and then fall asleep. With deep feeling she would solemnly repeat to herself again and again, "The blessing of God!" Often too in the midst of earnest prayer she would cry out, "Oh, I wish I could see him! I could sing so loud; I could sing Glory! Glory! Glory! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

'The Thursday before her death she said to a friend whom she had expressly sent for, "The Lord has been good to me many times. Many times have I stood in my yard, looking up to the sky, entreating him to help me, and I believe he will be with me even to the end." Then she pleaded with the Lord, "O Lord do come! Why art thou so long in coming?

"The feeblest prayer,
If faith be there,
Exceeds all empty notion."

And when the friend left, she said solemnly, "Good bye; and may the Lord bless you, and be with you in every step you take, and in the one now before you."

'After this she told another friend that she could give everything up, and was willing and ready to depart this life. She would say, "Lord, how long? Give me patience to bear to the end." On the Sunday before her death, she prayed, "Lord, shorten the time! I don't know whether I am right to say, How long? Let me wait thy set time." To her daughters she said, "When I am gone, don't fret for me; for I am safe." She died Dec. 10, 1872, aged 71.'

(Psalm cxv. 1–3). Two other members of the same little community died in peace during my visit. Thus the Lord is gathering in his ripe corn.

[Mr. Gilpin's sister MATILDA was, throughout her whole life, a very remarkable example of divine teaching. She was painfully exercised while yet a child with blasphemous thoughts; but one day, when standing under a cedar tree in her father's garden at Cheam, the Lord manifested himself to her, and caused her to know that his eye was upon her. Not being, however, conversant with any who fully set forth the power of experimental religion, she was greatly perplexed as she grew up, upon many points, until at length she began to despair of ever attaining to any establishment in the knowledge of God. Upon one occasion while reading she was arrested by the words, 'Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore THEY SHALL KNOW IN THAT DAY that I am he that doth speak: behold it is I.' She exclaimed, 'Impossible!' and the enemy seemed to repeat, 'Impossible!' In this painful state of trial the Lord appeared to her a second time, with great power, and enabled her to receive the above words as a promise. For the fulfilment of this she was led to seek most earnestly for some weeks, when she was awakened out of sleep with such a sense of the divine glory, that she was obliged to say, 'Stay thy hand, or I shall die.' She said at once, 'Lo, he is come: this is THAT DAY! This is the Lord; I have waited for him, and he will save me!' Her joy continued four months with scarcely any abatement, but afterwards her former perplexities began to press again; and she was also visited with severe attacks of illness for many years. At last, after a long season of earnest prayer, the Lord again established her heart, by causing her to believe his saving, effectual love in a vision. She saw the way set before her as full of fearful snares and dangers. Christ appeared to her saying, 'Will you go?' She replied, 'I cannot, except thou wilt be with me.' He said, 'I will go with thee. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' Thus she returned for a long time to the days of her youth.

Several other members of her family, through mercy, were not strangers to the secret voice of God upon the conscience; nevertheless, for the most part she felt her path a very solitary one, until after some years had elapsed she heard from her brother Bernard of his communications with the late Mr. Burrell. This induced her to go to London, where it may truly be said she 'received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost;' and while residing there, for a number of years, she was made a blessing to many, particularly to some of the younger branches of her own family. After Mr. Burrell's death she continued in London, under the ministry of her nephew, Mr. W. Benson, until, in consequence of failing health, in the year 1861, she returned to Pulverbach, and resided with her sisters until her death in 1867.

At the close of her life all that she had felt from her youth up was tried and purified in the furnace. Her temptations and conflicts were strong, but her faith and love were stronger. On one occasion she said, 'I was made to fall down before the Lord, under a sense of sin and just con-

demnation, and I could truly say from my inmost soul, "A JUST GOD." I was brought down in spirit for many hours, in a way I cannot describe. After which a blessed change enabled me to behold the Saviour, and I could finish the verse, "A just God AND A SAVIOUR." The feeling of my interest in him was more sweet than words can express. I had faith to behold the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, and all his people wrapped up in him from all eternity.'

At another time the Lord revived in her heart the power of the words, 'When thou passest,' &c.; and she added, 'I remembered his words, and what he forewarned me of. I have been made to watch concerning these things, and many times have felt that he has been with me, but I never felt it as I did last night.' Just at the end, one said to her, 'What a mercy it is that the Lord permits you to hide yourself in the dust!' 'Yes,' she replied, 'shrunk into nothing! Oh, the glory of Christ!' and soon afterwards finished her course as narrated in the diary.

It may here be mentioned that partly in consequence of his having become acquainted with Mr. Gilpin's sister Matilda, Mr. James Bourne was led to visit the neighbourhood of Pulverbach, as early as the year 1838, and several times afterwards. On his first visit he spoke privately to a few in his own room; but on his subsequent visits many gathered together to hear the word from his mouth. There were several of Mr. Gilpin's sisters who took a deep interest in its effect, and after the death of their father, in the year 1848, they continued to reside in the neighbourhood. One of them, still surviving, writes concerning this: 'So it was that the word fell as a dew from the Lord upon the hearts of many, and took such powerful hold upon them that some, who are still living, date their first awakening from that time; while many, who now sleep in the dust of death, have borne testimony to the last, of their gratitude to God for having called them under that ministry. We have nothing in our little assembly to boast of, either in the way of numbers or of outward manifestation, but we have found the presence of the Lord in our midst; and it will be enough for us, if we ourselves may be numbered amongst his hidden ones in the day when he shall arise "to shake terribly the earth."']

CHAPTER XX.

1867–1871. Conclusion of the diary, with short references to his visits to Brighton and Eastbourne—Increasing bodily weakness—Last entry in his sermon book—Leaves home not to return—Some of his last sayings—Tablet.

[In the autumn of 1867, Mr. Gilpin spent a few weeks at Hastings and Brighton. At the latter place he was invited by Mr. Wallinger to preach in the Pavilion Chapel, which he did from 1 Thess. v. 16–23. And he remarks, 'I preached with a measure of liberty, especially from this verse, "Despise not prophesyings." Remember (I said) that the ministry of the gospel is a prophecy, "O ye dry bones,

hear the word of the Lord. . . . Behold I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live." Oh, despise it not!'

After his return home it became evident that a gradually increasing weakness had already begun in a measure to incapacitate him for his usual exertions, so that they were performed with difficulty. Still he himself did not apprehend the approach of serious illness, and continued through the year 1868 and the commencement of 1869 to go in and out amongst his people with his usual lively interest in their spiritual welfare.

In the month of June, Mr. Gilpin visited Eastbourne, where he was asked once to preach. Concerning this service he writes, 'I never felt more unable physically, through weakness; my head was quite confused, and it seemed to me that I should be unable to carry it on. I began to try and help the matter by taking notes, but felt sure this was Saul's armour; so I forbore, and confined myself to prayer and meditation on this word, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." I felt ready to faint when the service began, but surely the Lord helped me, and by degrees I became quite clear, and preached with all my heart. I have great reason to be thankful for this.'

On receiving a letter from Mr. Spence, giving a good account of the friends at Hertford, Mr. Gilpin writes in his diary, 'Lord, let me remember to be thankful if thou wilt give me a minister's heart, greatly to long after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' After his return he remarks, 'Whilst travelling homewards I remembered the love which dictated what several of our poor friends said, "We shall pray for you."' Thus he was once more amongst his own people: but only for three months. His increasing weakness, accompanied with a relaxed state of the throat, rendered his voice often almost inaudible in the chapel.

The last time he entered his pulpit was Oct. 3rd, when he read Heb. x. 1–25, and took for his text Psalm xl. 6–8, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.' As was usual with him after preaching, he made a short entry in a book he kept for the purpose, which is as follows: 'In the course of my preaching my strength gave way, and the weakness, both of my general system and throat, so overpowered me, that I felt compelled to give up the idea of again venturing into the pulpit, except it shall please God to restore me to a measure of health. O Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner, and fulfil the text in me by the grace of the Spirit who wrought it, and not in measure, even in the Lord Jesus. Amen. Ὁ Θεὸς, ἱλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.'

Thirty-three years had now elapsed since the opening of Port Vale Chapel: and while during the same period death had removed many from his congregation, fresh hearers succeeded in their places, who, under the gracious eye and hand of the Lord of the vineyard,

had been brought to that favoured hill of Zion to bear renewed testimony that the word preached was 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' It was accordingly a close tie that in the outward part of it suffered separation when those circumstances transpired which brought Mr. Gilpin once again to Pulverbach, there, according to the will of God, to finish his earthly course.

The circumstances were these:—A sister had been fast declining in health, and the mutual desire of once more meeting each other in the flesh, combined with the fact that absolute rest from his labours was needed to carry out the treatment prescribed for himself, and that this spot afforded facilities for both these purposes, induced him to undertake the journey, intending only to remain a few weeks. But, as already observed, the will of God was otherwise; for his illness increased, so that he was never able to leave the neighbourhood into which he had come. For some months previous to his leaving home (which he did in the month of October 1869), his experience was felt by him to be expressed in the words of the Psalmist, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust;' but after a season, during which, to use his own words, it was as if he 'could not raise a cry for quickening grace,' the Lord touched his heart with fresh power from his first word, 'Ask, and it shall be given you;' and, moreover, remarkably revived the remembrance of a dream, which some years before had been attended with mingled feelings of comfort and fear as it intimated to him the approach of that time when the Lord would draw near to finish his work in righteousness. The signal accomplishment of this dream in the circumstances of his last illness was so felt by him that he often alluded to it, saying, 'When I came here I felt I was not coming for nothing.'

Five days after his arrival he made the following entry in his diary:—]

1869. *Oct.* 10. *Churton Cottage.* I went to Castle Pulverbach to see my dear sister Mercy, who was rejoiced to see me. We had a quiet interview. I found her in a hoping, waiting state, and very firm. How long it may please God to spare her to us is uncertain, and there appears no human hope of a recovery. How tranquil and abiding on the Rock her spirit is! *

I have but little power, either of body or mind; write with difficulty; and know not what course I must take for my throat. I pray the Lord to undertake for me. After long and trying darkness, I have felt some relief in praying over and over day and night, Matt. viii. 1–3. I want no more than to be the cleansed leper to whom Christ comes immediately. Grant it, O Lord.

* The sister here alluded to lived only till the following Christmas; another sister, Catharine, only survived Mr. Gilpin himself a few months: both of them realizing in their death the hope that had sustained them so many years, according to Isaiah xxv. 8, 9.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME NOTES OF HIS SAYINGS WHICH WERE PENCILLED DOWN FROM TIME TO TIME DURING HIS ILLNESS.

Nov. 19. 'It is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. I have felt it so, and that it is no use endeavouring to pray in a faith of our own; but O for that prayer,

"Pray thou for us (in us); that we through faith
May feel the effects of Jesus' death,
Through faith that works by love."'

Soon he added: '"Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage;" but he must say it, I cannot. O Lord, speak the word; speak it in me. What a deep knowledge the knowledge of sin is!' and he cried with trembling, 'Enter not into judgment with me: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning.'

After a pause, '"In his word do I hope." This is his word, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden:" I am one, but I cannot now hear his voice. Lord Jesus bid me come.'

Then he prayed for an eternal blessing upon his wife, children, grand-children, and his flock, respecting whom he said, 'Give my love to them. I believe my ministry to have been from the Lord,—that he bid me go, and not say, "I am a child," and I cleaved to his word.

'I cannot now realize what it was I felt on that night. [Mr. Gilpin here referred to the night of Nov. 14, allusion to which has been made in page 4.] There has been that within which has given the lie to it. Oh, to think of what there is within which denies the work of God! Who may abide the day of his coming?

"When in the solemn hour of death
I lift my soul to thee,
Be this the prayer of my last breath,
Jesus, remember me!"

My soul doth wait. What a little thing diverts! [he had just taken some grapes.] Oh that I could get into the same track again! What darkness I feel! "Be not silent unto me: lest if thou be silent unto me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Lord, speak one word of grace.'

Nov. 21. 'This morning early I had a profitable meditation leading me to this word, "Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" and I could with feeling enter into Berridge's 103rd hymn,

"Take my burdens for thy rest,
Take my death for thy life given;
Take my rags for thy rich vest,
Take my hell for thy sweet heaven.

Now the sale I understand,
Know what Jesus' market is;
Much he asketh at my hand,
All my woe to buy his bliss."'

In reference to his bodily distress and restlessness, which were at this time urgent, Mr. Gilpin said, 'We must pray that I may not murmur, but commit all into Christ's hands, remembering the Son of man had not where to lay his head;' and the language of his soul would often be, 'Why hidest thou thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble?'

Nov. 23. 'I have felt a gentle touch in the words, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee."' Towards evening he said, 'The Lord has gently pressed that word upon me till I am filled with peace.' This led to much prayer that we might not receive the grace of God in vain; and he remarked how readily, on the one hand, we get lifted up to make a show, and, on the other, how soon we forget the favour bestowed upon us. In times of his deepest distress the mention of this word to him called forth some expression of the power with which it had been attended, although he had lost the comfort.

Nov. 25. 'I cannot get beyond the prayer of the thief on the cross, and I do not wish to do so. It is an awful thing to appear in his presence. I do not desire it until the time comes, for how shall I stand unless he hold me with his right hand!' Later in the day he said, 'We think we cling and cleave to the Lord, but it is his hand alone that holds us fast, as the hymn says,

> "Thy parent's arms, and not thine own,
> Are those that hold thee fast."'

At this thought he was quite moved. Being left alone, he had a sweet meditation upon the hymn above quoted, and was enabled to rest himself wholly with the Lord Jesus, feeling the power of the Lord present to heal him. In the evening he said, 'It was the pure river of the water of life that flowed to me in all its healing power.'

Nov. 28. 'I have been praying that the Lord would give me the calm and solid assurance of his favour, and that my feet are upon the Rock of Ages,—that my religion may not be a flashy lifting up, and then overwhelming depression, with no profit in either state, but that it may be solid.'

Nov. 29. 'I believe it is in love. I could preach upon the one lost sheep: that subject has been with me the greater part of the night. Bless thee, Lord, for the grace thou hast given me. Let me glorify thee in my life and in my death.' Later in the day, 'Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me. Grant me some support. One ray of light! One word! Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. I am full of unbelief, and it frightens me. Son of God, Jesus Christ, give me thy holy, tried faith, and I shall rejoice even in the midst of the anguish I suffer.'

Nov. 30. 'A night of deep discovery mingled with temptation from the enemy. Oh, the malice with which he cast at me sins I never knew, polluting my soul with them! But I had a sight of Jesus, the Friend of sinners, who came to seek and save the lost;

and there was compassion in his look: and in the night many things were comforting to me. Amongst these were Cowper's lines,

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."'

Dec. 1. 'My flesh trembleth, yet there is an unspeakable feeling of love, joy, and peace, *deep down*.'

Dec. 2. 'I have had a refreshing sleep, and, more than that, a sweet meditation upon sinking into nothing before Christ. How was it that it came so quickly? Because the Lord my God brought it to me!

'I had been feeling how terrible to stand before the Son of man. The word says, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty." He appeared to Mr. Dore* as a poor man. He may so appear to me!'

Dec. 3. 'Last evening a season of anguish passed over me, in which I felt how readily the Lord's good work may be perverted.'

Dec. 4. 'I have found some relief from the fear I felt lest my exercises should lapse into false conflict, for I thought if diamond and road dust were mixed together they might look the same, but the diamond would be diamond still. So the Lord's work is his still. I desire to take comfort from this thought; for I believe the Lord gave it me.

'I had once, in a dream, a dreadful vision of Satan magnifying himself against me, and I spoke aloud the name of JESUS, when he sunk into nothing before me. Shall it be given to such a one as I to use that name? How shall I endure? If I am united unto him, his strength and mine are one!'

Dec. 6. He slept comfortably the early part of the night, and on awaking was made sensible of the Lord carrying on his work, as he told us, adding, 'He swept away many things from my heart as cobwebs, and afterwards sweetly communed with me from Jer. xxxi. 18–20, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus," &c. Each portion of which passage came with heavenly power, especially this, "I WILL SURELY HAVE MERCY UPON HIM."'

Dec. 7. 'O Lord keep me, I am turning aside every moment. Deadly silence now; yet, am I right in saying so, when yesterday I felt life in the word?'

Dec. 8. 'What a perception I have of the difference between the gentle work of the Lord, and the driving power of Satan!'

Dec. 12. The Lord granted his afflicted servant a seasonable relief in the midst of trial, by a kind of dream, in which he thought that, being in great fear lest his religion was sinking into nothing, he gathered up the words which from time to time had been given to him, saying, 'These are Christ's words;' and writing them down

* Richard Dore, a London mechanic, whose memoir Mr. Gilpin published in 1850.

he put them into Christ's sepulchre, saying, 'If they do not rise with him, he is against himself;' and his heart was established, and his feet, as he said, set upon a rock; no longer on shifting sands.

1870. *Jan.* 2. He spoke with much feeling of the words, 'Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.' Later in the day he said, 'A few minutes alone have not been unprofitable to me, for I have felt a power in the word, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee;"' adding, that though the word belonged in the first place to the divine Son of God, the head of the church, yet in the spirit of adoption he felt he might pray so too.

Jan. 31. For two or three days the word concerning 'the earnest of the Spirit' (2 Cor. v. 5) seemed to abide upon his heart, and afford him comfort, especially the thought in how low a place that earnest may be given which is nevertheless a part of the inheritance. He also described a touch in this, 'Ye are complete in him.' To-day he opened the book at Hosea xiv, 'Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously:' and he remarked, 'To think that he tells us to do it, and then goes on to say, "I will heal . . . I will love them freely."'

Feb. 6. He had a meditation upon the prodigal son, and upon the thief on the cross. He spoke with the deepest contrition of soul, saying, 'Salvation without anything in myself—without faith, without hope, without love. What a blessing! Complete in him! How sweet it was to me to think of the thief that stole* salvation, and the Lord accepted him!'

He often recurred to this subject; on one occasion exclaiming, 'That dying thief—how I love him!' The words were repeated, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' He said, 'Aye, and he will remember me too.' The same day, feeling grieved at his impatience, he said, 'All my evils show themselves now. Oh, that Christ would wash me in his blood! He has washed me, I believe it. I shall be found at Christ's right hand.'

For several days in the early part of this month Mr. Gilpin suffered much outward and inward distress, 'The darkness and silence in my soul (he would say) are more than I can bear;' but never were his words more full of deep contrition and self-rejection than at this time. Christ was all, although he said, 'To cherish hope now is past my power.'

Feb. 20. There was a sweet relief granted to him to-day, which he described as 'the gentlest dawn of day in his soul;' but so blessed was the measure of the hope given to him that he quite smiled with joy, reminding us of the words, 'Then was our mouth

* He evidently used this expression to denote the venturing power of faith, as Cowper does in his well-known line, 'And healing virtue stole.' Bengel also uses it in a similar sense.

filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.' He afterwards alluded to Dan. ii. 21, 'He changeth the times and seasons.' The next day the sorrow returned, and the deliverance which had been granted was withdrawn; yet truly the Lord 'knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.'

On the 28th of February it was with great difficulty he was assisted up-stairs for the last time; and he never again was able to use either hands or feet. His eyes closed for a week, and he seemed to be drawing near his end. It was also evident that his soul was in deep waters. At first every expression indicated fear and conflict, until one night when a change took place: after which, although his power of expression was so much impaired that it was not given to others clearly to trace the way in which mercy was manifested, it was evident he himself was in the sweet enjoyment of communion with Christ. From this time there was more child-like trust, and more power to realize the joy of the Lord.

March 11. 'I have had a blessed time. The Lord took away all my fear, and comforted my heart. I hope it will not be long. The Lord bless you and me. I believe he has blessed me.' Very restless in the night, he said, '"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." What is that rest? Jesus Christ.'

March 12. 'I know I am every way deficient, but I have a hope I would not be without for a million worlds.'

March 13. '"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him;" I feel a hope it shall be well with me. The trial is great, but there is a bright prospect beyond.'

One day he said to his wife, who tenderly nursed him, 'The Lord bless you, and keep you to the end, and save you; and may he bless all in this house, and comfort their hearts with the knowledge of the truth.' He afterwards broke out in the following happy strain, 'Heaven, not earth, is your portion. Life is your portion, remember that. Oh, be not distressed; bright is the prospect!

> "From all your afflictions my glory shall spring,
> The deeper your sorrows the louder you'll sing."'

March 15. 'If salvation depended upon my works where should I be now? This is my only hope, my only comfort, "Salvation is of the Lord." It is truth. I have believed. All fulness is in Christ.'

After a short sleep he awoke in exceeding joy. 'Jesus is near. I feel pardon and peace, and am secure in his blood and righteousness. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; world without end. Amen.'

April 14. 'Why castest thou off my soul? Turn and look upon me, Lord; one touch from thee; I don't care how little, how

gentle, if it be but one touch of thine eternal favour. O for one true genuine touch of thine eternal favour in Christ Jesus!'

April 16. 'I say, Lord, to whom dost thou give it? To the worst? Then give it me! But there is no answer. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.'

April 26. 'O Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me, and strengthen me. Look down upon my calamitous position, and enable me to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, for thy sake. Amen.

'I have had joy and peace in believing, but it is all gone now.' It was rejoined in the words of Christ, 'But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.' 'Oh, that it were HIS voice speaking to me; then I could rejoice! "O praise the Lord, ye people;" but I cannot praise him, wretch that I am! Once I said, Lord I will trust thee without a token; now I want a token. Lord, give me faith full of tokens. I believe it will be well; but oh, for one more sight of the Lord Jesus, one more sense of his love, and the resurrection from the dead, the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting! O Lord, have mercy; turn me not away, but let me cleave to thee. Let me die cleaving to thy cross, thy love, thy blood, nothing else!'

May 2. 'He searches me, he proves me, he makes me feel like a lump of clay in his hand. He shows me that false faith is no faith at all. Then I say, Lord, give me the true faith, and he seems to turn his back upon me.' One said to him, 'Is not that the true faith of God's own gift that endures in the very place you describe, looking and waiting for his appearing?' He replied, 'I hope so; if he appear, all will be right. To Christ's righteousness alone I cleave. Christ, the sin-bearer, let me cleave to thee. The faith of thine operation is the faith I have loved, desired, and longed for, but now all is darkness, yet the scripture says, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Even let it be so, Lord, until I drop into eternity. "Be not dismayed, I am thy God." He will not forsake those that trust in him. Lord, grant I may never give up praying, Thy will be done; and under these trying circumstances, Lord, enable me to continue to say it to the end. Lord, whatever thou dost enable me to do is thine, and to thee be the glory of it.'

May 18. 'One day he looked upon me and pardoned my sin in a moment of time; but, now, what judgment in the midst of mercy! I look to the Lord. I do look; and there is a little brightness. He does not look angry, but as if he saw something his grace had wrought in me,—grace only. I would have all know that it is not faith, but the Lord of faith, that saves. He can stretch forth his hand and do it in a moment.'

About this time he dreamt that he saw a poor miserable sheep cast upon a heap of rubbish in a corner of a field, its feet bound together, and itself unable to move except that it stretched out its

neck to the utmost, bleating after the shepherd, who was at a distance, and out of sight. In his sleep he thought he said, 'Bleat on, you'll be sure to find him. He has said, he will cast out none that come to him.' Those who heard him relate this dream, and beheld the effect of it in strengthening faith and hope, can hardly forget the feeling with which he told it; often saying, 'I have seen myself a lost sheep, bleating after the Shepherd, and he has told me he will not cast me off.'

For about ten weeks during the summer there was much suffering, both bodily and mental; and often Satan seemed permitted to take advantage of the afflicted state of this dear servant of God to aggravate his distress, but the life, love, and power manifest in his spirit were maintained and renewed; and notwithstanding the confusion of the natural mind consequent on the softening of the brain which had taken place, it was never otherwise than apparent that the Lord was chastening his servant for his profit, to make him partaker of his holiness. His heart was brought to increased submission, and his spirit mellowed by the trial; and all was in accordance with a word he had felt in a marked manner applied to him, 'Jacob, Jacob, fear not to go down into Egypt. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again, and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.' To these words he often recurred, finding them food for faith unto the strengthening of his soul in the prospect of deeper affliction (for more than once after their application, in the month of June, he bid us not be surprised if yet deeper trouble should come); that he should not go into it alone, but that the God of Jacob would go down with him, and surely bring him up again. And he several times particularly spoke of the last passage, as intimating the holy anointing of the eyes to discern the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Oct. 25. 'I have felt a gentle touch from the Lord, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." I could just believe that he would.' A part of Phil. iii being repeated to him, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect,' &c., he said, 'I have no thought that I am anything, nor am I thinking that I shall receive a reward for *my* truth that the Lord enabled me to preach. I have no desire that any one should say anything of me. All I do is to cast myself upon Jesus for all; and my whole desire is that he may be glorified by my ministry, and by his work of grace in me.'

Nov. 20. He suddenly exclaimed, 'What sweet words!—*Christ's peace.*' 'The peace that passeth all understanding?' he was asked. 'Yes, yes!' and he continued praying. This one petition was heard, 'Put me in the arms of Jesus.' He was reminded of the words, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.' He replied, 'I believe they are.'

After a time he cried out, 'He's come, and he's gone! He's gone away! Oh, he's gone!' and in this sorrowful state he con-

tinued for some hours, and then spoke: 'He says he will come again, and do it—wait—wait.'

Nov. 21. 'I have had a blessed time; I never was so happy! The burden of this clay is gone! The burden is gone!'

Nov. 23. To his wife, 'You have seen much trouble; now come and see a man who believes he is in the favour of God.'

During several succeeding days little was gathered; but from time to time he spoke as follows: 'I feel all this trouble is of little consequence, for I have a hope beyond it—a hope above it. I can trust him, and believe that he will come again, as he said, "It is finished!" Remember that.'

On the 14th of Dec. he unexpectedly said, 'I was happy in the night; I had a testimony from the Lord, but I cannot bring it to mind. It was his memory of me.' Some hours after he said, 'Look for the text which has *mountains* in it.' This was repeated, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee' (Isa. liv. 10). When asked if that was it, he said, 'Yes,' and remained silent.

Dec. 18. He spoke these words distinctly (in the third person, which was not unfrequent), 'He's happy! Don't be afraid—he's in heaven.' His eyes were closed, but the smile upon his countenance expressed a peace beyond anything this world can give.

Dec. 25. He said to his wife, 'I am in blessed peace;' and spoke not again audibly during the whole week, though one might perceive there was a breathing of prayer sometimes.

Jan. 1, 1871. He said, 'I am happy.' In the afternoon this word was repeated, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' Though he had been silent, and apparently asleep since he spoke in the early morning, he immediately took up the words, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' It was said, 'You have loved those words?' He again repeated, 'My soul doth magnify,' but was too weak to proceed. Not another word was heard. He continued in a quiet sleep, which gradually deepened till five o'clock on Tuesday evening, Jan. 10, when he opened his eyes with a sweet and peaceful expression, and in a moment breathed his spirit into the arms of Jesus.

'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.' Psalm xxxvii. 37.

Thus died Bernard Gilpin, having nearly completed his 68th year. He was buried within the family enclosure in the churchyard of Pulverbach. A marble tablet to his memory is erected in his own chapel in Port Vale. It bears the following inscription:—

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED

BY THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING IN THIS CHAPEL

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF

BERNARD GILPIN,

FOR 34 YEARS THEIR FAITHFUL AND BELOVED PASTOR,

AND IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

FOR THE BLESSINGS BESTOWED THROUGH HIS MINISTRY.

HIGHLY ESTEEMED FOR HIS WORK'S SAKE,

AND ENDEARED TO THEIR HEARTS

BY HIS CONSTANT KINDNESS AND GENTLENESS,

AND SINCERE HUMILITY AND LOVE,

HE LIVED IN THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL WHICH HE PREACHED,

AND DEPARTED IN PEACE, A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE,

10th JANUARY 1871, AGED 67.

'I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH; HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, SHALL GIVE ME AT THAT DAY: AND NOT TO ME ONLY, BUT UNTO ALL THEM ALSO THAT LOVE HIS APPEARING.'

CHAPTER XXI.

Narrative of Mrs. Gilpin.

My mother having died in India while I was an infant, and my father being much engrossed in human learning, and not till many years afterwards impressed with the importance of religion, I do not recollect receiving any early religious instruction beyond hearing a chapter in the Bible and one of Spinks' prayers read duly morning and night in the family. I was also required to take my stand among my brothers and sisters while we repeated the Church Catechism with perfect correctness to my father every Sunday evening, and this was followed by the reading of a sermon. I used to pay little attention to these forms, which constituted at that time the extent of our family religion; on the contrary, I often found them most irksome, my spirit being wholly set on this world. Still I felt sometimes convictions of sin when very young, but they were transient. The first I remember occurred when I was between five and six years old. I was unaccountably urged, out of mere curiosity, to try a foolish experiment which, though really harmless, I childishly supposed might prove dangerous. I pursued my purpose, however, in a reckless spirit, till suddenly a cutting conviction of sin struck into me; I thought I was hardened, daring, and presumptuous above other children; and I felt a measure of terror, with a vague expectation of judgment to come, that I long remembered with fear.

When I was about seven or eight I used to hear more about the importance of the soul from my elder sisters, and then I would frequently make resolutions of being very religious, and set about the business most earnestly; but my natural disposition being very inconstant, I never could persevere long together. This was a great distress to me, but I would try again and again, and sometimes kept up for a good while, very constant in private prayer, and laboriously striving against sin. I was often warned by my friends of the necessity of continuance in well-doing: and was taught to believe that converted people might turn back to the ways of sin again, and be eventually lost, which I always pondered with distress, believing it would be my own case. I thought it a most grievous pity that those who had at any time been in a state of salvation should outlive that and become heirs of hell again. This used to make me consider death, even in its most violent form, as the greatest blessing that could possibly befal a person as soon as ever he was once religious. Accordingly, as soon as I had kept on long enough in private prayer &c., I began to long to die as my best chance of getting to heaven. Once on a walk I found I had got into a field with a bull, and though

exceedingly afraid of those animals I really felt glad, in the hope that it would kill me; for I thought my pain would soon be over, and I should be out of the danger of becoming wicked again. So again when I awoke with a noise in the house, I really hoped there were thieves, and that they would kill me out of hand. (We lived in a lonely house, and were more than once robbed.) But death would not come: and after some time I got wearied out with my laborious religion, which was as hard to me as Egyptian bondage, and I began by degrees to relax a little, and at last let all go, and returned to the world again, but not without grievous smitings of conscience and bitter regrets.

These efforts were thus repeated, with little variety, and with shorter or longer success, at intervals during the remaining years of my childhood. One circumstance occurred, however, when I was about nine years old, which I will relate, because my sin on that occasion was sorely visited on me many years afterwards. One day my eldest sister was reading to us from the scriptures, and coming to that chapter where the 'sin unto death' is spoken of, she stopped to comment upon it, saying that it was a great mystery, and that no one can tell what that sin is: adding, that it was a great warning to us to resist sin in every form, lest we should commit it unawares; repeating, that no one ever knew or can know what that sin is. I felt while she was speaking an amazing curiosity to know what this secret mysterious sin could be; and indulging this curiosity, I thought of little else. At last something seemed to whisper, 'Commit that sin.' I was in the greatest horror, but still the temptation haunted me. I tried in vain to drive it away. 'How can I commit it,' said I; 'I don't even know what it is?' and now I was glad I did not know, lest I should have been hurried into the commission of it, which I felt would indeed be most deplorable. Still I was tormented by this fearful and unaccountable temptation to that degree that at last I desperately shut myself up in a dark cupboard, and tremblingly said, 'I commit it.' Thus I sought to obtain quiet, but the moment the words were out of my lips I was terrified. I would have borne anything to have recalled them. Surely I thought myself sealed for destruction. I feared and trembled greatly; but still a hope glimmered within that perhaps it would not be imputed to me: that perhaps that sin was kept secret on purpose to keep people from committing it. With this little hope, I knelt down and begged the Lord very earnestly to tell me if I had committed it: for I knew that if I had, it was useless to ask his forgiveness contrary to his determination expressed so strongly in the scriptures. I therefore confined myself to entreating him to let me know if I had absolutely committed it, past hope. I had never in my life heard a word that could lead me to think that God ever sensibly speaks to the heart of his people now-a-days, and therefore I have often been surprised to think what could put me upon asking such a thing. I kept begging and watching for an

answer; and when none came in the day, I implored him to speak to me in a dream, and reveal the truth of my case to me. I so feared the answer, that I hardly dared close my eyes at night; yet I longed to be at some certainty, for nothing I thought could be worse than suspense. However, days and nights passed, and nothing occurred from which aught could be gathered, and by degrees the follies and pleasures of childhood wore away my terrors. My impression is, though I have almost forgotten particulars, that the remembrance would frighten me for about a year; but after that I completely lost sight of the whole transaction, insomuch that I am not aware of its recurring to my memory till many years afterwards.

When I was about fourteen I was confirmed, on which occasion I again set hard to work at my religion, which I continued as long as the natural inconstancy of my disposition would permit, and then gave up as before. Many efforts of this kind, all leading to the same issue, recurred during my early youth. On my coming home from school at the age of sixteen, during the Christmas vacation, my father required me to attend the sacrament of the Lord's supper. This excited many anxious fears in my mind, for at that time I was quite worldly, and dared not attend in that state; yet I was kept by shame and fear from refusing to attend, which I thought would be a deliberate avowal of irreligion. So after many debates in my mind, and some distress, I came to this conclusion—that, as I must be religious some day or else perish, I had best set about it now. Indeed, I thought it an excellent opportunity, for I hoped that receiving the sacrament would be a strong tie to bind me to perseverance, vainly presuming that I should never be so wicked as to live in deliberate sin again after joining in that sacred ordinance. I therefore prepared myself with great earnestness and many long prayers, together with diligent self-examination, according to the routine prescribed by Spinks and Doddridge and such authors, and approached the table, pretty confident of the goodness of my state. Often did I pity and wonder at those who could dare to receive the sacrament unworthily, as I called it; though the most ungodly among them could not possibly be more ignorant than I was, of all that is signified by that sacred ordinance—even 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' My mouth indeed was full of the mention of his name as my only Saviour, but I spoke that I understood not.

After my return to school I found it hard work to maintain my strict religion among my thoughtless companions; however, I succeeded very well on the whole, and as I patiently endured some ridicule, and stood through one or two strong temptations, I began to think myself established. In about three quarters of a year more I finally left school, and returned to live with my family at Petersham, near Richmond. Here my religion seemed to flourish well. I became more and more earnest and constant in private prayer, and more self-denying in my daily walk. I have often looked back

with surprise at the strict scrutiny I used to keep over my thoughts and actions, though I was perfectly my own mistress and my time at my own disposal, yet I seldom ventured to undertake the smallest employment without seriously asking myself, not whether it was most agreeable to me, but whether I had reason to think it would be more pleasing in the sight of God than anything else I could be engaged in. This, of course, often obliged me to sacrifice even my strongest inclinations, which I found frequently very painful, but was supported by the thought that I must surely now be a converted character. Sometimes I would set apart a day for self-examination and humiliation before God. On these occasions I would take great pains to call to mind all the sins of my early youth, of which indeed I had a black catalogue to reflect on; for between my fits of religion I had been much given to deceit and lies, and in many other ways worse than other children. All these I would reflect on, dwelling on all their aggravating circumstances, until I have often lain prostrate on the ground with shame and remorse, and wept over, confessed, and begged forgiveness for them: I have more than once felt at such times that there was no indignity the meanest person could insult me with, that I should feel able to resent. All this I used to suppose must be godly sorrow and genuine repentance; though I now see nothing in it but what was self-wrought. In this way I went on supposing I had found all that was to be found in religion, and nothing now remained but to persevere to the end, and so be saved. Thus I made great account of prayer and searching the scriptures, but of the answer to prayer, or finding the God of the scriptures, I knew nothing.

I was in this state, when one morning I rose and began, as usual, to repeat hymns and psalms while dressing myself. All of a sudden it was darted into my mind, 'What is the use of all your prayers &c.? you had better leave them alone, for it is utterly impossible you should ever be saved: you have deliberately and of free choice committed the unpardonable sin.' And immediately the transaction I have already related, which occurred in my early childhood, was brought quite fresh to my memory. My spirit was thrown into great hurry and alarm; and I tried hard to fortify myself against it, and to withstand the fearful conclusion which was pressed on me as hard. I thought how pious I had become, and endeavoured to consider that a proof to the contrary. After a while I calmed myself a little; and as an infant was going to be buried close against my window, which looked into the churchyard, I thought I would sit at the open sash and follow the funeral service, a thing I was particularly fond of doing. Just at this moment the bell rang for family morning prayer, and I felt much tempted to absent myself, so strong was my desire to witness this funeral. After some struggles my conscience seemed to drive me to give up my inclination, and to go down, which I did. It happened that the chapter in course was not read that morning, but instead of it, that one which contains our Saviour's

mention of the sin against the Holy Ghost, saying, 'it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.' I cannot describe the terror that seized me while these words were read. It seemed to me that the remarkable circumstance of this chapter being selected just after the convictions I had had up-stairs, was ordained to prove my guilt and stop my mouth. My whole soul was in an agony. I shut myself up in my room, and spent the day in the bitterest anguish. I dared not open the Bible, nor pray, for I thought that I was utterly forbidden to do either. I can never forget the value and blessedness I then saw in the scriptures, and the envy I felt toward those who might read them. I shut the book and laid it at the further end of the table, and sat looking at it in deep distress. I thought I must give up all profession of religion, and never presume to go to a place of worship; and how I was to drag on the rest of my existence I knew not. At last I ventured to go and tell my distress to one of my sisters, in the faint hope that she might help me to a glimmer of encouragement. She answered that the exact nature of that sin was not revealed, and therefore it was not our part to enquire into it. I replied that I feared the way in which I had committed it cut off all hope that I was mistaken in the sin, for that I had actually been so mad as to say, 'Whatever it is, I commit it.' I then confessed all the circumstances to her, which quite staggered her; and after some silence, she only said, 'Well! it is astonishing how wicked even children can be.' Thus I got small comfort from her, and went again to my room worse than ever.

At length as I was wandering about the house, I found a heap of books that had lain undisturbed for a long time, and carelessly picking up one of them, I was somewhat struck with its title, which was, 'The Redeemer's Tears.' I therefore carried it to my room; for though I durst not presume to read the Bible, I thought as this was only a man's writing I would venture, still I expected to be greatly cut up by reading precious things of a Saviour in whom I had no interest. I sat down on the floor, and opening the book I found a little treatise quite distinct from the work of Howe's, the title of which had struck me, but bound up under the same cover, whether by the same author or not, I do not know. This little tract was entitled, 'On the Sin against the Holy Ghost, addressed to tempted souls.' I was agitated and astonished. I had never before in my life met with anything on that subject, and I thought it could not be by chance that it should have come to my hands at such a crisis. I therefore had a sort of expectation that it would pronounce my sentence one way or the other, and accordingly I began to read it through with deep attention and anxiety.

From what I recollect, I think the author must have treated the subject according to truth, and with wisdom. He did not attempt to enter much into the nature of the sin; but showed clearly that such as are under the guilt of it, are utterly destitute of the strivings

of the Spirit in their hearts: consequently they are hardened, insensible, and dead, or else given over to desperation, with rebellion and hatred to God, his ways, and his people. 'And therefore,' the author continued, 'how black soever the circumstances of your sin may have been, howsoever exactly, according to human judgment, it may seem to resemble the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet if you feel compunction and grief for your folly and madness,—if the love and favour of God seem more desirable in your eyes than all the world, and you long for the influences of that blessed Spirit whom you fear you have everlastingly offended,—I may venture to assert that you have not been suffered to sin "the sin unto death." On the contrary, you have ground to hope that there is already a seed of grace springing up in your heart, which has provoked the malice of the accuser of the brethren against you. He seldom molests any in this way, but those whom he is in danger of losing. Possibly you may remember that he never haunted you with this suggestion while you were worldly and careless; but now, it may be, you have begun to seek the salvation of your soul, there is nothing the devil fears like prayer, and this temptation is designed to cripple prayer: but pay no heed to him, only hold fast to prayer and he will surely be put to shame.' The treatise was as nearly as I can recollect to this effect, and I found it very encouraging: indeed I could not but hope it would in the end prove true for me; and though still in doubt and fear, I thought I would venture to the church as the bells were ringing for evening service. The first lesson was the 43rd chapter of Isaiah, and contained the words, 'Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' These words fell so sweetly upon my spirit, and infused such calm peace and joyfulness, that all my fears vanished at once, and if I had tried to recal them I could not have done it, and from that hour to this they have never been suffered to return upon that particular subject.

A week or two afterwards I was pondering the whole circumstance, and thinking I should like to read again the tract which had been such a comfort to me in my trouble. I went to seek the book from its place, to which I had restored it after reading. But when I sat down to read the tract I sought for it in vain. I turned leaf by leaf through the whole book, and it was not there, nor any allusion to it in the index. I could not tell what to make of this; but so certain was I that I had been made to read it there, and so certain that it was not there now, that I was ready to think it miraculous, but I never told a creature what had happened.

Several years after, this mystery was cleared up thus. My elder sister, (not the same whom I had consulted in my distress,) was em-

ployed with me in sorting my father's books after a family removal, and we fell into conversation about some of the authors and their writings. She observed that even good men were often very injudicious; and brought up as an example their publishing treatises on the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which, she said, was the very way that such things are put into people's heads, adding that, for her part, she never allowed such things to be in the house. Of course this called to my mind all that I had gone through, and I said, 'What then, have you ever destroyed any?' 'Yes,' she answered; 'there was one in one of our books, and I got it out without hurting the book at all; you cannot think how cleverly it could be done, and the place too where it was noticed in the table of contents. I would defy any one to find out that anything had been removed from the book.' 'I know what the book was,' said I, 'it was Howe's "Redeemer's Tears."' She answered, 'What then, had you seen it?' I only said, 'Yes;' but I felt a good deal, and thought what a mercy it was that although it had been for years in the house she had not been suffered to lay hands on it till just after it had done what it had for me.

I think that, doubtless, there was the working of the Holy Spirit in what I have related, though it was soon smothered and obscured again by the clouds of self-righteousness and legality: for after I was thus delivered from that fearful temptation, I went on very smoothly, and made, as I thought, great progress; and I think I may say that 'after the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.' I prayed, read, strove, denied myself in every way. In word I renounced all my own righteousness, and I verily thought I trusted wholly in Christ. But I now see that all this while I was really ignorant of Christ, and was under the law, though couched in gospel terms, as Ralph Erskine means when he says in his Gospel Sonnets,

> 'The law of works into repentance, faith,
> Is changed, as their Baxterian Bible saith.'

And being under the law, whose demands are infinite, the more I did, the more it required. Nevertheless, I kept on the whole pretty comfortable, because my gospel notions, such as they were, came in to make up all deficiencies. It is awful to think how I, like others in this state, could talk and teach of Christ, and fill my long prayers with the continual mention of his name and righteousness, and yet know nothing in the world about him experimentally, not having been brought through that tedious and killing work of pulling down the natural foundation of self-righteousness, without more or less of which none can be built upon the Rock. How did I neglect and overlook full one half of the word of God; not discerning that the promises are made to 'the lost,' 'the blind,' and 'the prisoners!'—to which states I had never been really reduced. As for sensible answers to prayer, I may say I never looked for any. And the forgiveness of sins I thought to be what would of course take place

without our knowing it, if we were very religious, and that we must take it for granted without any experience of it. Such truths as these, that Christ will manifest himself unto his people as he does not unto the world, I either explained away, or neglected altogether (John xiv. 21, 22).

I made no doubt whatever that I was a doer of the word, and not a hearer only, because of the strict watch I used to keep over my thoughts, words, and actions, striving after usefulness to others as well as inward holiness. I was on the whole very successful; my temper seemed quite subdued and every passion brought into subjection.

In this state I had a short illness, of which I thought I might die; but was so confident of the soundness of my religion, that I even longed for death, and was quite disappointed when I found myself recovering. I am persuaded that had I died in such a state, I should have made many triumphant speeches about my entrance into glory, and being with Christ. This has shown me since that a false hope may support the soul in the prospect of natural death, and therefore that an exulting death does not *prove* a profession of religion to be genuine, as Bunyan implies in his Pilgrim's Progress, where Ignorance is carried over the river, high and dry, by Vainhope. And the Saviour himself declares the same thing, 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (or taught) in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils (renounced the devil and all his works)? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' For workers of iniquity all will be accounted who have not known Christ, and been known of him, whatever apparent excellence they may have attained.

Thus I was 'alive without the law,' and sin was dead; and as I made so sure of my being in a state of grace, it is no wonder that I had often seasons of much happiness. This natural joy and satisfaction I took for the peace of God, and thought it one of my tokens for good, because the word says, 'Rejoice evermore,' &c. Therefore I nursed it, and knowing nothing in all this religion of the plague of my own heart and the temptations of the enemy, I could pretty easily maintain it, insomuch that I have often taken such delight in prayer and meditation as to pass the whole day, two or three times a week, in those employments, and have thought, If the world did but know this pleasure they would leave all their vanities to enjoy it. All this while I knew nothing of Christ, or of that state of spiritual destitution set forth throughout the scripture, by numberless figures, as the state to which he brings his people, and wherein he reveals himself to them as a Saviour in time of need. 'The heart is deceitful above all things,' and therefore I did not suspect at the time, what I have clearly discerned since, and that is, that my comfort was secretly based on my perseverance and success in religion. I used to go to rest very happy, and after

I had lain down commonly repeated aloud two favourite hymns, one of which contained these words,

'Jesus, thou my guardian be;
Sweet it is to trust in thee.'

And in the other were these words,

'Mean as we are, by sins and griefs beset,
We glory that in him we are complete.'

These last lines especially I used greatly to enjoy on my best days, but I recollect I could not say them if I had given way to spiritual sloth, worldliness, or any other sin during the day. I would then feel very uncomfortable, and used to pray for forgiveness; but knew nothing of finding the blood of sprinkling applied to my conscience, whereby I should have experimentally entered into those lines, and without which they are but an empty sound. I would secretly take comfort from resolving to be more watchful next day, and generally lost the pressure of the sense of sin during the night: so that I began pretty clear afresh next morning, and if I succeeded better all was right again.

In this state I continued till some time after my removal with my family to Hampstead, and then I remember two occasions on which my confidence received a sudden shake, the effect of which was very terrible to me.

The first was this. I had been praying very earnestly in private as usual, and came out of my room more than ordinarily happy and well satisfied with my state, when as I was coming down-stairs I was suddenly arrested by this question inwardly suggested: 'Are you sure you are born again?' 'Yes,' I answered, 'surely I must be!' The question was repeated. I stood still and wondered what could put such a thing into my head, and answered as before, only more at length bringing up, as I thought, scripture proofs. Again the same question was repeated more solemnly, and, as it were, preceded by a 'Nevertheless.' I was chilled throughout in a way I cannot describe, but held fast mine integrity, and tried to have the last word. Still it presented itself; and I was obliged to go away with it sounding unanswered in my heart. This caused a dreadful feeling. I believe it was a conviction of the Holy Spirit; but I thought it came from the enemy, and wore it off by constantly resisting it.

The second occasion was just before a sacrament. I had been earnestly preparing myself all the week, and was at the time engaged in fervent prayer after long self-examination. If I remember right, I had been blessing God for enabling me to devote myself to his service, and begging him to enable me to continue and increase. Just at this moment I was conscious of an inward conviction, that all this my religion was to come to nothing—to be utterly destroyed. I thought this came from my own imagination, and was afraid of giving it force by opposing it. I therefore coolly tried to turn my eyes another way, and to pursue my former train of thought. However, I

could not put it aside, for it increased to a most positive intimation of the dreadful truth, for such it was to me at that time. I was horror-struck, and in great agony of mind; for I had no idea that the destruction foretold could be in mercy, as it is written, 'Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.' Little did I think that in the loss of that specious religion I should but be losing the shadow, the letter, and the form, to find the substance, the spirit, and the power. I thought rather it implied final apostacy from grace.

The terrifying effect of this abode long; indeed it never wholly left me, for I believe the hopeless feeling it wrought went far towards making me reckless and desperate in the spiritual declension which commenced soon after. In a few weeks more, I found I had lost all relish in religious duties: I gradually left off private prayer and watchfulness, and at last got quite thoughtless and worldly. I had indeed intervals of bitter misery and anguish of soul, in which I would strive, as it were, in the very fire, to regain what I had lost. This was the very utmost bound of my desire, for I really believed that religion was the religion of the Bible.

We had now removed to Buntingford, and I was just twenty years of age. I was looking forward to my approaching marriage with a sort of hope that, in becoming the wife of a clergyman, the sense of responsibility would urge me to greater exertion to regain and maintain my religion: for I had never been brought to discover the depth of powerful truth which lies hid in those easily quoted words, 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.'

It was at this time that I first had the doctrine of election brought to my particular notice. I found some of my husband's family whom I looked up to, strongly held this doctrine, and those allied to it, such as the believer's perseverance and the impossibility of finally falling from grace. I rather argued against them for the sake of making my friends bring forth their proofs. For these things came quite new to me, and I secretly longed they might be true, as they opened a door of hope unknown to me before; my belief that I had once been a believer being still unshaken.

It was somewhat more than a year after my marriage, viz. on the 5th of May 1830, that I began to feel a return of more abiding concern for my soul. I received a shock on that day by hearing of the sudden death of a worldly relation in the prime of youth and health. This caused much working of fear in my heart. Throughout that summer I was in a very peculiar state. A little glimmer of light gradually began to shine in the darkness, but truly the darkness comprehended it not. For I thought I was getting into a worse state than ever. The enmity of my heart was aroused in a way I had not felt before. At times I felt irritated, as I may say, against the Lord for not giving me better success in my religion. Besides this, some of those books which in my former state had been my greatest favourites, now

excited in me bitter indignation. I did not yet understand their legal bias, so unlike Owen, Bunyan, and Romaine, but supposed them to be every way faultless; so that I really thought my dislike was only against what was good, and yet could not restrain it. Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress,' especially, I had formerly delighted in; and governed every day of my life by its rules to the very utmost I had been capable of. But now, that I was beginning to be brought into a state of spiritual poverty, like the Israelites, I was without straw, and therefore could not deliver the tale of bricks: wherefore I hated the taskmasters. This arose to such a height, that one day I took that book and angrily flung it across the room, resolving never to pick it up wherever it might fall. It lighted on the top of a high wardrobe, and I do not recollect that I ever saw it again, though I felt for a long time exceedingly guilty whenever I thought of the top of that piece of furniture *. At this time, secret doubts and suspicions used to arise, as to the nature and reality of my former profession. But I could find no fault in it whenever I examined it, for there is not a grace of the Spirit mentioned in the scripture, but what I had had the counterfeit of in time past. Then I would set apart a day for prayer and fasting before God, in which I would beseech him most earnestly to show me the truth of this matter. I would spend hours in examining my religion, as I thought by scripture rules, and I always came to the same conclusion, viz. that it certainly was genuine, and that I would harbour no more of these evil questionings. But I was never suffered so to rest long. Soon all my doubts returned, and I very often wondered what would be the end of all this, and what it could mean.

During that year and the next, my state grew worse and worse to my own feelings. I gradually lost all power to offer one connected prayer, though I had formerly been very fluent. I could no longer pray for others, or even ask for faith or any other grace for myself. I would kneel down with my heart very full, but so dark and confused that I could not possibly put two words together. I would remain perfectly dumb for a length of time, and then rise without having uttered a word. At one time for weeks and months together the only prayer I could put up was, 'Lord, I know not what conversion means: thou knowest: O give it me.' I must have repeated this hundreds of times I think. I was also brought to such a sense of blindness, that really some of the rooms in the Rectory used, for a long while after we had left the house, to convey to my mind the impression of dark rooms, without windows, from the exercises of mind I had gone through in them.

* So deeply had Mrs. Gilpin been entangled by a legal spirit, and to so great a length had she carried out the directions given in the works of Dr. Doddridge, that they had become to her taskmasters indeed: and those who can sympathize in the painful exercises through which she passed, will readily make allowance for her excess of feeling, without condemning such as may have received a less unfavourable impression of the same works, owing to their having read them in a different spirit, and having been less entangled by them.

After I had gone on thus for a long time, without finding any answer or light on my path, or hearing anything from others that could explain my case, I began to give up all for lost: I was in despair of ever succeeding, and resolved I would try no more, and even pray no more; except just to repeat over and over as I went about, 'Lord, I am weak, be thou my might; Lord, I am blind, be thou my sight.' Here I seemed at the worst, for having given up all hope of finding religion, I was dreadfully afraid of death; and to make my fear greater, the cholera came to our shores, and at last to our town and very door. This dreadfully alarmed me, but I did not betray my fears to others, and seldom spoke of religion to any one.

One evening, when things were in this sad condition, I visited a sister who lived at Hertingfordbury. There I met my brother Charles. He had been brought to some experience of the power of true religion, which was gradually breaking him off in spirit from the prevailing profession around. He shared my husband's duty at that time for a while, and I had been a good deal in his company, but had never said a word about religion to him. However, that evening he said these words in an accidental way as it seemed: 'It is very easy for a person to have an amazing deal of outward religion, and of closet religion too,—prayer, reading, self-mortification, and everything else that seems good,—with their mouths, heads, and, as they think, their hearts full of the name of Jesus Christ, while they are all the while turning their backs upon him, and utterly disregarding the salvation he wrought.' This remark fell with an unspeakable weight of conviction on my spirit: and the words, 'Thou art the man,' seemed to sound through my heart. My sister thought the statement unguarded and somewhat overwrought, and said a good deal to soften it down. He heard her through, and then quietly repeated all even more strongly than at first. I believe I betrayed my emotion, for I remember he addressed me afterwards; but I was so utterly amazed that I neither heard nor heeded a word more that either of them spoke. How I went home I know not. I only came to sufficient consciousness to perceive where I was when I arrived at my own door. Then I remembered, with great regret, that I had not required my brother to explain to me what the fault of such a religion was. For I had as yet no suspicion in what direction the error lay, and thought myself as far from finding out the matter as ever; when these words came unsought into my mind, 'And they shall be all taught of God.' For a moment I was comforted; but as I did not understand the voice then, I concluded it was merely a suggestion of my own mind, and therefore put it from me, saying in my ignorance, 'Oh, that is only in the Old Testament spoken to the Jews! I don't know that it alludes to the cases of individuals like me in such a literal manner as I should need.' Soon after, I opened the Testament on the place where Jesus renews that promise, saying, 'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.' It came

to my heart then very sweetly for a while. After I was in my room that night, I felt a great spirit of prayer come upon me, and a resolution to cry till I obtained this effectual teaching from God. I knelt down by my bedside, and thought I could not rise from prayer all night. But almost before I could lift up a thought to the Lord, a wonderful inward light flowed into my soul, accompanied by a verse in the Revelations, which contains the word 'FREELY.' 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' It was only the word 'freely' that was spoken to my soul, and that with indescribable power. I saw in it what I had never conceived before. It spoke thus: 'Let go all your prayers, all your earnest spiritual desires, all your victories over sin and self; turn away your eyes from beholding such vanities, and take my salvation FREELY.' The feeling conveyed to my mind was, that that one word 'freely' filled heaven and earth. The light that came with it, and the discovery made by it, astonished me so, that I was quite overcome with amazement. 'Oh,' I said to myself, 'does every scripture doctrine contain such a depth within it, when revealed by the Spirit? I wonder whether any one else understands the word "freely;" if they do, I wonder they can help speaking more of it to each other!' Many such things I said in my ignorance, thinking I should have such wonders to tell of it; whereas, when I tried to explain the word to others, I found I was only saying the oldest and most common-place things, such as I myself had over and again taught the school children. Then I found that the difference lay not in the letter, but in the experience and power. I am very sure that by our natural powers we can get hold of nothing but the letter; and that if a person be not sensible of the infinite difference between these two kinds of knowledge of every truth, and cannot sympathize in the feelings of astonishment excited in the breast of one to whom this has been for the first time manifested, it is because he has never got beyond the letter, and is probably ignorant that any further knowledge is to be found. And truly I can say that I found none among my former religious acquaintance that could understand me when I laboured to convey to their minds what I found in the word 'freely.' I was like one that talked strangely to them—not that they denied the truth that I held, but rather spoke thus, 'Of course it is so; have you never known that before? Don't you remember the scripture says so and so?' as if I could have learnt it from the letter alone. I felt that I could not make myself understood by them, and at last quite gave up trying to speak of these things to others; not indeed laying the fault to them, but rather to my own confusion of mind.

For some time the effect of this sweet manifestation of the truth to my heart abode with me, and often returned afresh in a remarkable way, thus:—Almost as soon as ever I began to lift up my heart in prayer I used to receive the impression of a bright light, far, far away; and with it would come such a sense of utter nothingness in

myself that I seemed to cease from everything, even from breathing, while the Lord Jesus carried on alone the work of my salvation. I do not mean to assert that either I did actually cease from breathing, or that this light did shine before my natural eyes. It was rather the figure or similitude by which the Lord saw fit to convey to my mind the lesson he designed to teach me. This happened in May 1832. It lasted a fortnight or three weeks; and after that, the effect in some measure abode, though it is surprising what darkness and legality still encompassed me. The Lord says, 'I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them;' so I was utterly ignorant of the way in which the Lord was teaching me by little and little; and therefore, because the sensible feeling of the above experience did not abide, I to a great extent gave it up, as if it had all come to nothing; and thus lost sight of it to such a degree that I should never have been able to give a consistent account of it, had it not been sweetly revived many times since.

[Mrs. Gilpin next gives an account of her first introduction to some of the hearers of the late Mr. Burrell. She writes:—]

I was entirely unacquainted with the principles of such of my sisters as had separated from the establishment, and when I heard that my brother Charles, after leaving Hertford with the intention of merely passing a day or two with them, had found such union with the members of their connection that he had determined to cast in his lot among them, I felt astonished and mortified, not doubting but that he was sadly beguiled. At this I was the more disappointed as I had held him in very high esteem ever since what had passed on the occasion I have related; always feeling convinced he had found that reality in religion which I was but darkly seeking after, as it is written, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant:' but there is a fear, and a fear towards God too, to which no such promise is made, for it is said of some, 'Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men,' which had surely long been true of myself. But at the end of August following, circumstances obliged me to pass through London; and I slept one night at my sister Harriet's* home. I had no intention of speaking to her on the subject of religion. However, a few words passed between us, as we were about to part next morning, which had an effect on me that I did not expect. She began to say something on those subjects. I interrupted her by saying, 'I really am not able to judge of anything you advance, for I am very ignorant.' She answered, 'Dear sister, pray don't be too sure you know what being ignorant and blind means.' I rejoined, 'O but I am ignorant and

* The late Mrs. Col. Nicol. A few years after the above took place, she finished her course with joy. Amongst her last words were these, 'All my sins are forgiven me through the blood of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Ghost is in my heart, and he comforts me. I have been like the camel, but God has brought me through the eye of the needle' (Matt. xix. 24).

blind, and that to such a degree that for months together I have not been able to make out the simplest prayer, but just to repeat over and over, Lord, I know not what conversion means. Thou knowest. O give it me.' Her emotion betrayed the pleasure and surprise with which she heard me; and for my part I was fully as much surprised at the lively interest and tender sympathy excited in her by a confession of what seemed to me so bad. After covering her face with her hands quite silently for some time, she at last said rather abruptly, 'Then how can you keep friends with such authors as Doddridge? what can you find in them to suit a case like what you describe?' . . . . 'Well,' I said, 'I cannot say but that I think they must have been very good men, nor can I see any error in their works, but yet what you have said makes me confess that my "Rise and Progress" lies covered with dust at the top of an old wardrobe where I flung it in my despair, but I have always thought I did very wrong.' She smiled significantly, as much as to say that I should see more on that subject bye and bye; and she put into my hands Hart's hymns, and a manuscript book containing copies of a few letters of Mr. Bourne and Mr. Burrell; and we parted with more than usual affection. Short as this conversation was, it kindled a feeling of union with her which I had never before felt in any religious intercourse whatever. Indeed I believe I felt then, for the first time in my life, a little spark of the true unity of the Spirit. This however was soon obscured, for shortly after circumstances occurred which excited very strong prejudices in my mind against my relations and their friends, whose conduct and sentiments were represented to me under a load of evil report. However, another sister wrote to me in consequence of what my sister Harriet had told her of my state of mind. My prejudices were so strong that I did not feel any impression made by her letter, yet one expression abode by me. She said she had been stripped of all her former religion; and truly, thought I, so have I. This by degrees wrought with me to write and enquire of her whether she had found a better, for I was sure I had not: but no one can tell the jealousy, fear, and mistrust with which I wrote that letter; in consequence of which it was not in the least a true index of the state of my mind. I was inwardly much broken and brought down by what I had gone through, but yet the terror I had lest I should be led into error made me express myself in many parts in what must have appeared haughty and positive language, implying that I was predetermined throughly to canvass if not to reject whatever was said in answer. This letter did not, I suppose, much invite a reply: certainly I received none; and this made me the more determined to have nothing to do with them, for I thought theirs was a very bad spirit.

Throughout the rest of that year I went on by myself, groping for the wall of salvation like the blind, and, notwithstanding my resolutions to the contrary, I was conscious of my eyes being often inwardly turned towards my brother Charles and his friends, as being

possessed of something I had not found. This was exceedingly strengthened by the perusal of the letters which my sister had lent me. Had I read those letters before I understood them at all, I should probably have seen little more than common things in them; but now, if I may so express it, I understood them sufficiently to see how little I understood of them; and they made an impression on me I never can forget. I would read them till I was lost in wonder, and would keep turning back and back almost every half page I read, to look at the date, saying, 'What now, in 1832, is there any religion like this really existing? Are there any living in these days, to whom the Lord really and sensibly speaks, and to whom he manifests himself in this beautiful manner? I thought all such things had ceased since the Bible days. I can scarcely believe it true; yet I feel that this letter is no lie, and written by no liar.'

The inward drawing I now felt, to go and hear what they had to say, came, I believe, from the same source as with Cornelius, whom God directed to send for Peter to hear words of him; which words his heart had been prepared to receive, and so had mine: and I had no more will or power to disobey the inward voice than he had. Accordingly I made an excuse for going to London in Jan. 1833, having heard nothing from them in the interval. I was kindly received, and introduced to some of their friends, especially Mr. Abbott; and in the evening we met for the purpose of their entering into conversation with me. I felt much embarrassed at first, expecting, from past experience, that I should have great difficulty in making myself understood sufficiently to convey to their minds any just idea of the state I was in. But no sooner had I begun to stammer out a few words, all in confusion, than to my surprise I found them received with entire sympathy, and such a perfect understanding of my meaning, that whenever I was at a loss to express myself, my sentence was taken up and finished for me exactly to my heart's content. Mr. Abbott, who especially spoke on that occasion, would take up the thread of what I was trying to say, and would go on describing the secret workings and windings of my experience so minutely and so faithfully that it was to my feelings little short of a miracle. I found I had not come to inform others of what I had felt and where I now stood, but to be informed myself. This was new indeed to me, and it convinced me that the truth of God was among them, in the same way that the woman of Samaria was convinced that Jesus was the Messiah when she said, He 'told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' which words of hers came strongly to my mind at the time. I found my heart to join in unreserved union with theirs; and though I heard many things in their experience far above what I had yet reached, yet even such things did sweetly accord with, and explain to me, what little I had been brought to the knowledge of.

The instruction I received here, combined with the various exercises I had gone through, enabled me to form a decisive judgment, and

one which I know will be found according to truth, of the zealous profession I had formerly walked in. It was, as I may say, crumbled to dust before my eyes, so that there was not found in the bursting of it, 'a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.' I saw it to be a tissue of refined self-righteousness; and the sum of all that can be said of my then state is, that I had 'a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.' All my attainments in that kind of religion I did now heartily renounce, and have never since desired to regain them.

I returned to Hertford very happy, sweetly assured that I was in the footsteps of Christ's flock. But being still very ignorant of the Lord's way of dealing with his people, I took for granted that the light and comfort I now enjoyed would abide and increase, and that I should never get into such darkness again, and that the rest of my way would be comparatively smooth. Especially I thought, that as my great enemy, self-righteousness, was now unmasked and detected, it would no longer be able to deceive me to my grievous loss. I had been seriously warned by my friends to beware of resting short of finding some sensible manifestation of Jesus Christ to my own soul, and of the application by the Spirit of his blood to my conscience, giving me the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. I had heard some of them give an account of the way in which they had been brought, again and again, to this soul-satisfying experience; and of the continual necessity they found of obtaining a fresh application of the blood of sprinkling to their consciences, whereby alone the believer can be cleansed from his daily sins and infirmities, and walk with God in peace and equity. The sober-mindedness and godly fear evident in those from whom I heard these things, gave a just weight to what they said. Besides this, I had an inward testimony to the truth of them, in the experience I already had, small as it was, of the reality and power with which the Lord could make his voice to be heard and understood in my soul; and that too at a time when I did not in the least expect it, never having heard such a thing was to be looked for. I had indeed sometimes been told that some deluded people trusted to frames and feelings, and pretended to visions and revelations, but I had never met with such people. I now have no doubt that there are many under awful delusion of this kind, as well as of every other: but still, I am very sure that those who are brought to experience the power of vital religion must take up the cross, and bear the reproach of being themselves thus deluded, among the great mass of high professors, who know nothing but the letter.

I was, at this time, set upon obtaining the testimony of God by the witness of his Spirit in my heart; but little did I know the difficulties that lay between me and the full accomplishment of my soul's desire. Little did I think I had almost everything to learn, and, if possible, more to unlearn; for I had yet an amazing deal further to

come down. I feared opposition from without, but knew next to nothing of the opposition from within,—the opposition that my own heart would still keep up in every form against the new principle implanted, as it were a grain of mustard seed, and which would be amply sufficient utterly to destroy it, if it were upheld by any power short of the power of God. I had to discover that the discernment of self-righteousness, or any other sin, is one thing, and the power to subdue and expel it quite another. Oh, what a monster have I since found self-righteousness (or legality, which is but another name for it) to be! The different shapes it assumes are past man's finding out. Though it seem slain at times, it revives again; and repulsed in one direction, it comes on in another. Truly it may be compared to the 'beast which had the deadly wound, and did live.' Nothing has ever wrought such self-despair in me, as the continual fresh discovery of this sin. Indeed, I have found the path to be one most painful to the flesh, and I have never gained any real token for good, but through much tribulation.

[Mrs. Gilpin next relates that, being now fully shown the hollowness of her former religion, she found by degrees it was impossible to maintain communion with those who had never been brought to see the danger of such a profession: and that she was especially tried in attending certain religious meetings, that had for some time been held at the Rectory, by the easy and confident manner in which the promises of scripture, any real entrance into which she found it so hard to obtain, were handed about from one to another. She proceeds:—]

The principal reason for which I have introduced the subject of these meetings at all is, because I wish to give a short account of my withdrawing from them; since this was connected with the first sensible help and light I obtained from the Lord after my return from London, and which came at a time of great need, as follows:—

The joy I had felt when I first returned from London, shortly abated, and my impatient expectation of finding great things all at once, was disappointed. Especially I found that the earnest spiritual violence, with which I made sure of taking the kingdom of heaven by force, was not at my command, so that I too often felt as dead, hard, and indifferent to all spiritual things as possible. All this, in my ignorance, I had not laid my account for, and did not understand. Therefore it disheartened me, and filled me at times with doubts as to the truth of those things which I had lately heard and believed. Though I had found such sweet union with my friends when with them, yet after I had parted from them, and the savour of my visit was over, I could not recal to mind what I had felt with any power. Our Saviour said that when the Holy Spirit should come he should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them; and it is only he that can do so. I had felt very confident that I should henceforth be proof against all that I might continue to hear laid to the charge of those whom I now so highly valued.

But in my dark and bewildered state, I found this was by no means the case. The enemy did not fail to help forward my calamity, and often succeeded in filling my mind with suspicions and prejudices, more especially as some one informed me that certain among my friends were actuated by a very bad spirit. The enemy took this advantage to 'come in like a flood,' and crowded in his proofs with such force that I was quite carried away. He made it seem as clear as possible that they were walking in a false light, insomuch that I resolved to renounce all further intercourse with them, and inwardly trembled at the narrow escape I had had, of being entangled in a dreadful snare. All this seemed certain, but still the question would obtrude itself, 'What then will you do?' I could not answer, for I could not bear the thought of betaking myself to my old empty profession of religion again, where, like Baal's priests, I found 'neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.' 'What is true religion?' I cried. 'Where is it? Who is right? Is any one right? There is a heaven, but as far as I can see, there is no way to it in all the world. As for men, they are all deceivers, all.' I do not think I ever felt such anguish as filled my soul, while I uttered these words, under the pressure of deep temptation. Never did I feel more hopeless or further from the possibility of help. At last I cried out in misery, 'There's no way—all men are liars, all, all.' At this moment, these words were spoken to my heart with indescribable power, 'I am the way, the truth.' In an instant I was delivered from all my trouble, and the discovery of this way was as new to me as if I had never heard of it before. Well may the Lord say, 'Behold, I make all things new,' even in this sense; for I am sure that the very oldest and most well-known truth, when revealed by the Spirit to the soul, is new indeed; yea, again and again, as often as it is revived.

I was now full of joy, and made to feel Christ alone to be perfectly enough, so that for some time I ceased to think of any man; but when by degrees I called to remembrance my London friends, I found the present light shone upon and revived what I had before felt among them; so that my union with them was sweetly confirmed. Thus, like Israel of old, I eat of the old corn, 'because of the new.'

Afterwards I was reading the Bible, and came upon this verse, 'Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' I felt an awe on my spirit in considering what a depth of truth lay under these words, and a longing desire that the Lord would some day open them to me by his holy Spirit; for that it was I had found so very blessed, as I have related.

The next day there was a religious meeting to be held at our house, and I attended as usual. Though I had so lately been happy, yet my spirit sank to such a degree that I believe I looked more dejected than usual, for the lady who conducted the meeting addressed herself particularly to me: I quite forget what she said, or what I answered; but I well recollect that she rejoined again, in a tone of expostula-

tion, though I had not referred to the text, 'Well, but surely we know that Christ is our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' and then she looked round the room for confirmation of her too confident assumption, and some motion of assent was immediately made by all except one, whose case strongly resembled my own. I can hardly convey an idea of the way in which these words, so lightly spoken, fell on my spirit; and in the light that I had obtained the day before, I saw so clearly the hollowness of that showy profession, that I was compelled from that time forward to withdraw from all connection with it.

It was a great mercy to me that my dear husband gave me full permission to act according to my conscience in this and other cases. In truth, the very same work was being carried on in his heart, and wholly independent of what was passing in mine, except that the account I gave him of my first visit to London tended exceedingly to convince him that those who had conversed with me, were themselves taught of God. He had not been in the same state with myself formerly, accordingly there was afterwards some variety in the way we were severally led. Yet I think I may say that the teaching in his heart and mine did truly harmonize; so that we found sweet unity of spirit continually. I remember well, so long ago as the first or second year after our marriage, when I would bemoan myself to him in the thickest of my darkness, he would say to me, 'I believe some day you'll find that self-righteousness has in some way come in, but I have not light enough to explain how.' I could not believe this then, because in the letter I did so strongly hold Christ to be all in all; but I have since found he spoke very truly. Another thing he used to say, which I could as little believe then, but which has since been happily verified: 'I believe firmly, that God has begun to show you some especial thing, and I hope we shall both be enabled to watch what it is.' He was thus made very tender of attempting to stifle any conviction either in himself or in me.

After this time, I was very earnest again to obtain some clear manifestation of Jesus Christ to my soul, but was still like the man whose sight was but half restored, who saw 'men as trees, walking.' So I was yet very ignorant, and truly I knew not what manner of spirit I was of, for I have been made to discern so much sin mixing itself with all that earnestness that I have seen abundant cause to justify the Lord for keeping me so long in darkness. Especially I have been convicted of an inordinate desire of obtaining the testimony of men, that is, of those whom I now looked up to in religion. I longed to be able to commend myself to their favourable opinion,

[illegible] to tell them of my prevalence in prayer:

[illegible] wisdom and mercy of God in frus-

[illegible] heless, in great and undeserved

[illegible] together, even at that time,

[illegible] me to keep on waiting upon

him: especially on one occasion, with the relation of which I shall close this account.

One day, when my anxiety was at the highest, and I was constantly entreating the Lord Jesus to reveal himself to my soul, I was all of a sudden conscious of his approach. I heard, as it were, the footsteps of his coming. To those who have not known by experience what this means, no explanation of mine will convey it: to those who have, none is necessary. For they have felt how every faculty of the soul seems to wake at the sound, in breathless expectation, while its inward language is, 'Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.' This is what our Lord meant by saying, 'My sheep hear my voice;' and again, 'They know my voice,' and 'They know not the voice of strangers.' Also it is written, 'They shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I.' This was indeed the case with me then, though I was thinking of other things when it came, for I was busily engaged in giving some orders to a servant. I had never felt this before, yet I wanted no one to explain it to me, and I hurried the servant away big with the expectation of what was coming; nothing doubting but that I was now going to receive the accomplishment of all my desires and prayers. I was about to kneel down, but before I could do so, the Lord spoke. I heard nothing with my outward ears; indeed I think he conveyed his meaning to my heart without any words at all; but certain I am that the purport of what was said to me was this, 'Not yet,—it would not suit you yet, wait on, and the time will come that you long for; you shall not be finally disappointed of your desire.' This was done in a moment, and all was past. But the power that accompanied it, wrought such a transformation in me that I was as happy and contented as could be. Had any man told me a minute before, that I was going to receive nothing but the information that I must wait, without knowing how long, for that sensible pardon of my sins which I was expecting that minute, I should have been ready to die with disappointment. Nothing that any man could have said would have reconciled me to it; whereas, when the Lord spoke, my will was brought in a moment to such sweet and cheerful submission to his will, that I kept thanking and blessing him for intending to answer me at the time that pleased him best, and this in the simplest way, without the least force or constraint on my feelings. My heart overflowed with thankfulness, and I was quite happy.

But I was yet such an ignorant babe that I understood these things no longer than while I actually felt them. So that after a few weeks, when the power of this was gone, I knew not what to make of it. I thought of it with disappointment, and even wondered at myself for having felt contented. Indeed, so little did I comprehend the work of the Spirit, that I even repented of and regretted the sweet submission he had wrought within me, and thought I had given up my point too easily, and thereby lost the blessing. I only mention this to show how much folly and ignorance are 'bound up in the heart of a child.'

I shall now close this relation, having carried it as far as, and indeed farther than my original intention; which was to draw up an account of the different steps by which I was gradually made to forsake my former profession, and to withdraw from communion with many I had revered and esteemed from my infancy.

I have many times found great sweetness in the review of all the way the Lord has led me. How peculiarly perverse and unteachable I have been! Like Israel of old, how soon have I forgotten his deliverances out of trouble, and returned to the very evils that brought me into those troubles! I have done nothing but return evil for all the good that God has shown me, and to this hour I have to confess, to my grief, that I am 'bent to backsliding:' being tormented by an 'evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God:' so that I can feelingly say with Hart,

'If ever it could come to pass
That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,
Would fall a thousand times a day!'

On the other hand, with what infinite patience and forbearance has he borne with my manners in the wilderness: how has he instructed me, 'precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, and there a little;' gradually bringing me to a clearer knowledge of himself. When by my sin I have brought myself again into darkness and trouble, how often has he taken compassion upon me, and surprised me with his mercy, delivering 'my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.' So that I can at times joyfully sing,

'His love in times past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink:
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through.'

[Written] *May* 28, 1841.

CHAPTER XXII.

Narrative of Mrs. Gilpin completed by extracts from her own and her husband's writings—Notices of the Rev. C. Jeffreys, Mrs. Benson of Norton-sub-Hamdon, and Mr. Burrell.

[In the autumn of 1836, Mrs. Gilpin had a very severe illness, in which she was exercised with much fear in the near prospect of death, being sensible that, through the backsliding of her heart, she had lost the Lord's sensible presence. She was however raised up, and felt with gradually returning health a sweet hope that better things were in store for her, though still unable to find the life and communion she longed for, until the Lord returned to her in the following gracious manner. She writes:—]

I continued to feel languid and lifeless in my soul until the after-

noon of Friday, the 9th of September; when after resting for an hour I awoke with a sweet feeling, and found my spirit looking to the Lord. I said, What is this, Lord? Is it from thee? And these words came in very sweetly, 'I will not leave you comfortless;' very gently, as if they were whispered. My soul was still, and felt very peaceful, and I continued looking to the Lord, telling him that I really thought he had just given me a little sip of his kind tenderness, and applied the above promise, and that I desired greatly to thank him for this mercy. The next day he did indeed fulfil this promise, with much greater power than I had ever before experienced. About noon I went into my husband's study to rest, and soon afterwards a feeling came over me that I had never experienced before, but once, in a much less degree; I can only describe it in Hart's words, of which it forcibly reminded me at the time, and which exactly express it, 'I felt myself melting away into a strange softness of affection, which made me fling myself on my knees before God.' My spirit fell down before the Lord, and sweet comfort flowed in from him. My husband was in the room, and though I knew he would have rejoiced in my joy, yet at that moment I wanted to be quite undisturbed and to hearken what the Lord would say concerning me, so I restrained my feelings, though with much difficulty, and multitudes of passages of scripture kept pouring into my mind with wonderful sweetness and power. The enemy tried to mar my happiness, by hurling many accusations against me, but they were all answered as fast as they came. I now write only from recollection: most of the texts I have forgotten, and the words with which the accuser was answered; but they were very striking, and all flowed in quite unsought and unstudied on my part. I remember once the enemy suggested strongly that what I felt was only fleshly excitement, and self-wrought,—that it did not come from the Holy Spirit, and that at best it was but hope, though in a greater measure than I had ever felt before. Then this word came in, 'That ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost,' and the temptation vanished, and I wondered with delight at the goodness of the Lord, and at his power and wisdom, who could make even the fiery darts of Satan to be the occasion of increasing my comfort rather than dispelling it. So that at length he retired for the time, quite defeated in his malicious attempts against me; and indeed he could not venture any more for a long while to cause me to deny that the Lord had been with me of a truth. My husband soon left me, as he had to visit a friend in Hertford, and would not return till late. He perceived something unusual was passing in my mind, and therefore to avoid disturbing me he went out quietly, and also gave orders to the servants not to go up to me at all unless I should ring the bell. Soon after he left, the great power and sweetness I had enjoyed began to subside. I felt very sorry for this; but I thought to myself, I know we are not to expect such great indulgences to be lasting—to have them at all is a wonderful favour;

when these words were powerfully whispered to me, 'He made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us . . . and he went in to tarry with them.' Such a suggestion coming at such a moment seemed to me a promise of the like happy success, and so indeed it surely was; for, on my pleading it earnestly as such to the Lord, he owned it by an immediate fulfilment. All my comfort came again, if anything increased, and tarried the whole of the day. I had no thoughts to spare for my meals. The hours came and went without my observing them, so that, as I did not ring the bell, I saw no one till my husband returned at night. I cannot describe what I felt during the whole of that day, but I remember that I did sensibly receive answers to petitions long past, and even quite forgotten by me, till at that time recalled to my recollection and most sensibly answered. These very petitions, at the time of my making them, had, I well remember, seemed to myself as if put up against a dead wall. Now it appeared to me that the Lord had dealt more wonderfully with me than with any one else; for I could believe none were so undeserving as myself, none so helpless, none so obstinately opposing. I saw and felt that he had led me from first to last in such a manner that heaven and earth must be constrained to give him all the glory of my salvation. I could freely beg him to take the sole management for ever of all that concerned me. I could unreservedly thank him and bless him for all that he had done to me, even to the taking away several of my children, which I then called my idols of clay. My whole soul, filled with gratitude, said, 'Lord, I never knew it was for this!' Though the enjoyment gradually abated that night, yet a very sweet savour remained with me for a long while, and a delightful remembrance of what I had felt that happy day. I never afterwards could think of it suddenly without a thrill throughout my frame; and I used to say, 'Lord, I know of a truth that thy love is better than wine—the wine of all earthly enjoyments whatsoever.'

Feb. 26, 1840. I desire to set down in simplicity, if the Lord will enable me, a short note of the very precious help I have received this evening. I have been for some days in the 'horrible pit' and 'miry clay.' Everything that I had experienced during the last four or five months appeared to me contradicted and disproved. I felt the dreadful enmity of my heart, murmurings, and rebellion; then checks of conscience, and a conviction that I was kicking against the pricks, intervals of bitter misery, and utter inability to repent, believe, or pray; yet many seasons of earnest desire to find the Lord, and a struggling cry, which did not feel like prayer, often rising up. My case seemed to have become desperate, and I felt I must prevail with the Lord, or 'perish from the way,' for I could not possibly deliver myself out of the miseries I had brought myself into. He alone could help me. And I said, 'Lord, are thy strength and power great enough to reach me even here?' A little faith sprang up, and I said strongly, 'Yes, they are! But

are thy mercies and willingness great enough?' The spark of faith rose higher, and I added still more strongly, 'Yes, they are!' I could not have said so during many days past. Then a mighty cry came into my soul in which I felt faith at work. I had no plea but the desperateness of my condition, nor any hope but in the Lord, a help in time of need, a Saviour in time of trouble. Before I rose from the floor, on which I had flung myself in my distress, my heart was meekened, and I could hear, as it were, the footsteps of his approach. I was conscious of a power at work within, though but 'a still small voice.' When I opened the Bible I was quite astonished to find so great a change. Instead of being a sealed book, it talked with me, and instructed me everywhere. Every verse seemed alive and a light. Oh, the understanding and light that flow into the soul when the Spirit shines upon the word! It must be experienced in some degree to be in the least understood.

I feel a great awe upon my spirit while recounting these things, but I think the Lord Jesus knows that it is true. He showed me that he had himself been in my dreadful place, and reminded me of petitions that I had often put up that he would conform me to his image, while every word of the 22nd Psalm, taken in connection with Hebrews ii, was made most beautiful, especially the way in which his people's case is set forth as one with his own. I did see and feel that I had brought on my distress by my own sins entirely, yet it was as if the Lord Jesus *would* tell me that nevertheless he had been in my case. At first I endeavoured to put this from me, saying, 'No, Lord, for this is all my sin, and thou didst never sin;' and still he would make me feel him very near, even as a brother. Then I lighted on those words, 'He is not ashamed to call them brethren.' This quite broke my heart. Oh, how these words kept sounding within me, And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but THOU hast done nothing amiss. (Luke xxiii. 41.) The whole Bible seemed to speak the same way, while such words as these were brought to mind, Who was 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' 'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' He has by this teaching commanded a great calm in my tempest-tossed soul. Though I do not feel great joy, I feel sweet peace. The light is real and powerful, though not brilliant: it seems like the early morning, which though inferior to the blaze of noon, is yet quite clear enough to put one beyond all doubt of the reality of the objects it discovers. Lord, grant that it may prove the dawn of DAY. Amen.

[During the following twelve months Mrs. Gilpin had some very blessed manifestations of the love and care of God, bringing her to full resignation to his will. She died in the autumn of 1841. Her husband writes:—]

Throughout the last summer of her life, her health was very precarious. She spent much of her time alone; and it became very evident that the Lord carried on his work in her soul with power. She often complained of much darkness, and that even upon many points which she had at previous times most clearly seen, and which she still held fast by the power of God, though the springs of faith and hope were greatly hidden. Here she acknowledged that much she had formerly learnt, must be learnt over again in a more teachable spirit. 'But,' she said, 'I look to the Lord, with hope in his mercy through Jesus Christ, for the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost.' It was during this season of darkness that she composed the following lines*:

'Lord, hear a sinner cry,
Look down with pitying eye,
Deign to draw near;
Over my darkened soul,
Clouds of confusion roll,
Sorrow and fear.

Where is that blessed light
By which in error's night,
Truth I first learned?
When in affliction's hour
It shone with heavenly power
Deeply discerned?

Then to my inmost heart
Thou didst ONE WORD impart
Mighty in strength;
Large, and yet larger grew
On my astonished view,
Its breadth and length.

FREELY, it seemed to say,
Cast all your fears away,
FREELY believe;
Cease from your legal state,
And my salvation great
FREELY receive.

And cannot memory trace
Full many a time and place
When thy sweet smile
Dried each desponding tear,
And darkness, doubt, and fear,
Fled for awhile?

Are these things really so?
Then why this weight of woe?
Dost thou not say
That heaven and earth shall fade,
But not one word thou'st said
Can pass away?

But I have lost my light:
Cheerless and dark my night;
Where can I flee?
Tangled 'mid snares I stray,
None can direct my way,
None, beside thee.

Oh, from my heart I own
That through my sin alone
Have I come here!
With me be shame of face,
But with thee righteousness;
Lord, thou art clear.

Yet, hear my bitter groan;
Toward thee I make my moan;
Tell me thou'rt mine.
Still full of truth and grace,
Once more unveil thy face,
O once more shine!

Make me thy truth discern;
Sure I've yet all to learn!
Teach me anew.
Cause these dry bones to live,
Lord, thine own work revive;
Guide thou me through.'

This darkness and spiritual labour continued to increase till the night of Sept. 27. Her language that night was, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?' I felt encouraged in my own soul to say to her, 'You are near his deliverance.' At this she paused, and the

* These lines were published in Life and Letters of James Bourne, pp. 342, 343. Mrs. Gilpin also wrote the well-known 'Hymn for a Little Child,' beginning, 'Our hearts are very full of sin,' &c.

thought passed through her, Perhaps I am. And so it proved; for a very earnest spirit of prayer was poured out upon both of us, and the Lord revealed his lovingkindness with great power to her heart, and showed her the tender regard he had over all the circumstances of her case, and made her in the full confidence of faith surrender all, both for time and eternity, to his safe keeping. She said, 'The light has broken in: it is like the morning light to me.' After a time she spoke again, 'Oh, this light! this glorious light! My hope has laid hold on all things that the Lord has wrought in my soul from the beginning, and it points forward to heaven itself.' In answer to further enquiries she spoke to this effect, 'The Lord Jesus has in the clearest and tenderest manner revealed his love in my heart, and while I was entirely taken up with admiring and adoring his kindness he made me understand his most gracious attention to all the circumstances of my case. I felt ashamed, as thinking this kindness was too great; but the more I shrank from it, so much the more he pressed it on me, till at last I was made entirely willing to resign myself, my family, and every other concern, together with the new-born hope that had visited my heart, into his safe keeping. At the same time he plainly intimated to me, that this particular support was intended to strengthen me in some approaching trial, which now therefore I expect.'

Not long after this, feeling very ill, and wondering what the issue might be, she opened her Bible, and was arrested by this verse in Proverbs, 'In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.' However, she passed these words over, and found a gentle and very peaceable impression from another verse, 'He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' From this she felt satisfied of the parental love of God; and while sucking honey from these words, as she expressed it, the former words returned with a weight of the Lord's reproof, as if he said, 'Attend to it—In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.' She said, 'Lord, deliver me from vain talking;' and then it followed, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' This brought her very low to entreat the gracious help of the Holy Spirit to keep her from offending; and after this another word restored her hope, and brought comfort to her soul, 'The ear that heareth the reproof of life, abideth among the wise.'

On Oct. 5 we were alarmed by symptoms of inflammation of the brain. At this time she was left to contend with the powers of darkness, but not so as to prevent her vehemently crying to the Lord Jesus Christ for help and strength. I repeated to her the account of Hezekiah's conflict, and she outran my words, saying, 'Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' Throughout the following day she could neither speak nor be spoken to. The next morning she appeared rather better, and began with returning

powers of speech to utter expressions of adoring gratitude, hope, and love. The Lord strengthened her faith so that she contended manfully against temptation, and came off more than conqueror through him that loved her. Throughout the 8th and 9th days of October her conversation was full of power. A remarkable teaching granted her on a former occasion seemed brought to her remembrance with sweet comfort and encouragement to hope still upon the arm of the Lord: and calling me to her that she might describe it, she asked me to read John v. 24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.' She then said, 'I had those words given to me in a very wonderful manner. It began with a glorious perception of the presence of the three Persons in the Godhead. My heart was filled with reconciliation through the blood of Christ, which brought in the Father's love, by the application of the Holy Ghost. Had I never heard of the doctrine of the Trinity before, I should have believed it from that day forwards. My joy was for a time suspended by the appearance of an awful shadow, as of eternal death: but it was said to me, "This shadow shall not be your portion; you shall not come there:" and I was made to pass on and behold a very bright light, which was represented to me as eternal life; and the words followed, "You are passed from death unto life; that glory, come it soon or late, shall be yours."'

On the 9th of October my sister Matilda came to see her. She said to her, 'How kind of you to come to see me! but you are come to see me do the hardest thing—you are come to see me die. I have been greatly exercised, and have waded through many deep waters, and have had many fears since I saw you last; but now I have a hope, a good hope, a living hope, which the Lord has given me, and I can put my trust in him. He has delivered me, and he will yet deliver me. He only knows the strength of the hope he has given me.' In the evening, after some hours of great restlessness and many fears, she was brought to a very sweet feeling of the words, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety' (Psalm iv. 8). She had them often read over to her, saying, 'The Lord has whispered them softly.' The savour of these words never left her to the end.

On the morning of Oct. 10 she still seemed better, and appeared to have a near view of the presence of the Lord; yet spoke much about the continual conflict she was in because of the accusations of the enemy, which she said were very desperate. 'But,' she added, 'the Lord comes in with the mighty torrent of his love, and assuages all my grief. I feel I am in his hands, whether for life or death; and he has given me such resignation to his will, that I have no choice of my own. I want only to be assured of his love, and I am assured of it. I feel his blood sprinkled upon my heart; and he tells me that he has died for me—a vile sinner!'

At another time she expressed great refreshment from different passages of scripture which were read to her, among others, Psalm xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.' 'That is just what I desire now—to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever! To dwell in his house, is to dwell in Christ: the Lord teaches me that, and makes me to know what it is to dwell in him, even in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost! Where is that passage, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion?" Read it: for that is what I feel just now—Praise waiteth in my heart; I cannot express how I feel that the praise in my heart is stretching forth its neck; yes, it is ready to burst forth because of the Lord's mercy to me a sinner. Could you have thought that he would have passed by all my transgressions, have put his love upon me, fastened it upon my heart, and never let it go? therefore praise waiteth in my heart.' Afterwards she repeated the same words to me, saying, that the praise in her heart stretched forth its neck; and asked me to read the Psalm to her, which I did. I said, 'Do you know that is just what the apostle Paul says of the new creature in Romans viii? "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." That word "earnest expectation" describes in the original, the stretching forth of the neck.' 'Now does it,' she said, 'how very sweet that is!'

Upon the 21st of Revelations being read, the 6th verse particularly attracted her attention, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.' And she said strongly, 'Lord, thou didst once give me that verse, and that word FREELY did appear so wonderful to me,—yes, large enough to fill both heaven and earth!' Again pleading with the Lord, she said, 'Lord Jesus, if thou wert on earth, and I could get behind thee, and touch the hem of thy garment, I feel persuaded thou wouldest not turn me away.'

Many times she spoke of her approaching death, saying, 'I know I shall not recover, but die; nevertheless I am in the Lord's hands.' On hearing the verse, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee,' &c., she said, 'The Lord is with me; I am passing through deep waters, and I have many fears; but my hope rises higher than my fears, and I do not believe I shall suffer shipwreck.' At another time she said, 'The Lord has dried up Jordan to the bottom before he has required me to set one foot in it.' After this she had an hour's sleep, but awoke disturbed and harassed in her mind by blasphemous suggestions against the Lord, which she immediately imputed to the tempter, saying with great vehemence, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies' (Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22): and she added, 'Oh, what hatred the Lord has given me to Satan, for he keeps hurling in a

host of fiery darts to tempt me to think hardly of the Lord's dealings with me, but the Lord is my stay!' Again, being fluttered and in pain, she was reminded of her need of patience, when she became calm and said, 'Speak one word to me about Jesus.' Her sister quoted the words, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.' Shortly afterwards she said, 'The Lord sees the heart. He knows that I cry to him without ceasing.' Then turning to a friend she added, 'Now tell my sister, that the Lord Jesus has looked upon me and smiled sweetly.'

Her brother Julius having arrived, she awoke from sleep, and recognised him, and addressed him tenderly, 'My tabernacle is being taken down, but I hope it will please the Lord to take it down gently.' Previous to his coming, she had asked for the words to be repeated, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.' 'The Lord,' she said, 'has often put me to sleep with those words, perhaps he will again.' Her brother having left she sank into a profound sleep, which increased till we all became aware that she would wake no more in this world. After continuing thus for thirty-six hours, she gently expired in the morning of Tuesday the 12th of October, 1841, in the 35th year of her age. Thus it appears how signally the Lord fulfilled to the end the promise he gave her in her youth, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.'

NOTICE OF THE REV. CHARLES JEFFREYS WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS LETTERS.

IN the midst of his University career *, Mr. Jeffreys was arrested by the hand and teaching of God; and being naturally gifted with a remarkable power of elucidating any subject that he handled, his sermons before the University, while Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, became deep, clear, and spiritual expositions of the word of God. It was during this period that he visited the neighbourhood of Hertford, and the conversation took place to which Mrs. Gilpin refers (see p. 196), and which shows in some degree the searching power of his communications; but the tenderness and deep humiliation of his spirit cannot easily be conveyed.

* While at Cambridge, Mr. Jeffreys was contemporary with Professor Airy, afterwards Astronomer Royal, and they took honours at the same time, the Professor being Senior and Mr. Jeffreys Second Wrangler. The account here given of him is necessarily short and imperfect, as very few materials are at hand; but it will be interesting in connection with Mrs. Gilpin's narrative, and especially so to those who knew him in his lifetime. A memoir of Lieut. Francis Jeffreys (another brother) was written by Mr. Gilpin, a second edition of which was published in 1847, together with a memoir of Edward Croxall Willoughby, Esq., of Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

His intention was to continue his connection, as Tutor, with his college; but perceiving that the work of God upon the heart, whereby the sinner is abased and the Lord alone exalted, was little known and appreciated by his associates, he resolved to dissever this tie, and finally he gave up also his prospects of preferment in the church, and taking up his residence in London, he attended Mr. Burrell's ministry. His health was very delicate, but he still expounded the word, and preached occasionally; his ministry being greatly valued by those who could enter into its spiritual unction and power. He was ultimately led to go with his family to New Zealand, where a sister resided with whom he was truly united in spirit. On the voyage he wrote home thus:—

'THE weather has been beautiful, and my asthma and all sensation of distress in my chest have left me. I should be ready to complain indeed that I cannot find it so concerning the soul; for I still find that which troubles me, and makes my spirit weary. But in this I find consolation, for I see that if the things of the Lord are cast off, the soul escapes the tribulation; and in patient endurance and prayer I find in a measure again the revelation of that mercy which, being higher than the heavens, changeth not, but endureth the same for ever.—C. J.'

After reaching his destination he wrote again:—

'The Forbury, Dunedin, *April* 20, 1855.

'I HAVE been brought low, and seem to have been almost without power to write upon the matters you treat of, though my spirit much enters into them. I cannot but believe, however, that the Lord is doing his own work, and will guide you through; but all things prove that the way is rugged to the pilgrim's feet, and this seems needful to preserve from spiritual slumber. . . . The Lord has carried on his work in you, no doubt, through many temptations, and through such things as you looked not for. These things, however, teach us that mercy is precious and salvation great, which we suppose we know, but we find we have yet to know it far more.—C. J.'

'*March* 28, 1857.

'IT was with much gladness that I received the account you sent me of the goodness of the Lord to you, in the step you have been led to take, and especially in his gracious dealings with you in the way in which he led your spirit to follow him close, and to receive all of his hands. Surely it is a marvellous and special grace for any to be enabled, on any occasion, so to walk; and the word of the Lord then seems so complete that it seems difficult to understand how the soul shall come again into darkness. But surely the teaching of the Spirit, and that which the soul has to learn of the evil within, ceaseth not. I have sometimes thought of that scripture, "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Now though this be only true finally of such as are not under grace, yet it is true of that evil principle in the children of God which he mortifies by his teaching and grace. When the soul is under spiritual chastening and affliction, the flesh is kept sight of, and watched as a prisoner under guard; but when goodness is manifested, and joy is reaped, then in the jubilee of gladness this enemy appears to

make his escape, whilst it is not perceived when he is gone, nor how he is working till afterwards, for he is well able to join in the gladness of manifested good. Now surely the mighty majesty of the Lord stands in having found a way to do good only for his own great name's sake, to the utterly unworthy and still unworthy creature; and to behold this faithfully by the Spirit's teaching to the end, is that "land of uprightness." This is abundantly felt by the soul at the first; but as the favour is continued, the flesh appears to gather some self-trust or self-complacency, as though self were somewhat commensurate with the favour exhibited, or superior to others, or possessed of strength or wisdom more than before. But as the word saith, The just shall live—shall go on to live—by his faith: and the heart that is lifted up is not upright in him (Hab. ii. 4). This uplifting may take place quite imperceptibly, and if not perceived doth bring the chastening of the Lord, which is administered because of eternal love and faithfulness.

'I know not why I have written thus to you, but surely I could not except I felt you were in some measure acquainted with, and valued the Spirit's teaching, and our hands may be strengthened by a meditation on the way in which he leads us.—C. J.'

THE following extracts are from letters written by Mr. Jeffreys' relatives at the time of his death:—

'New Zealand, *Dec.* 10, 1862.

'... DEAR uncle Charles Jeffreys baptized our little one on the Sunday morning I was at the Forbury. I thought he was looking better than I had seen him for long. He held the child long in his arms. His discourses that day, Nov. 16, were most impressive, both in the morning and in the evening. He indeed spoke as a dying man on the borders of eternity; so earnest were his exhortations. That afternoon he caught cold; and while conducting the evening service seemed to speak with difficulty. He died on the Tuesday night of the ensuing week, Nov. 25. He had fallen into a calm sleep when his spirit passed away.—K. F.'

'*Dec.* 1862.

'... YOU will have heard of one vacancy among your distant circle of relatives—one has laid down the cross, and now wears the crown. Dear Mr. Jeffreys no longer pleads his Master's cause on earth; his work is done. May his family ever hold fast the hope he so long and faithfully set before them.—E.'

'Otago, *Dec.* 13, 1862.

'... MY dear father spoke much during the night of the 23rd ult., but it was not easy to understand him as he could only gasp out the words. We heard, "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob had faith. I see the heavens opened! Lazarus was caught up into Abraham's bosom!" His last sermon on Nov. 16 was very impressive. The text was 2 Cor. v. 10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." He spoke very earnestly indeed, and little did we think it would prove the last we should hear from him.—W. J.'

It would be an omission, if, amongst the many testimonies which this volume contains to the covenant mercy and faithfulness of Jehovah, as the God and guide of his people even unto death, no mention were made of its display on behalf of one whose memory is especially dear to many surviving children, Mr. Gilpin's sister Frances, wife of the Rev. John Benson, of Norton-sub-Hamdon. Her death took place at Yeovil in Somersetshire, on the 20th of January 1865, at 70 years of age: when amidst her assembled family she testified that the sting of death was taken away, and that she was in the enjoyment of the peace of God, saying, 'Surely, surely he is with me, or where should I be? certainly not in peace;' and when the words were quoted, 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us,' though she could not speak, she raised her head from the pillow, with beaming face, in token of her full assurance of victory.

In her early years Mrs. Benson had not been a stranger to the secret and warning voice of God upon the conscience, although she understood it not. 'In the year 1816,' she writes, 'I can well remember (and it has very often been brought to my recollection since) with what caution these words fell upon me, "Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god." It was true indeed that I heeded them not: I did not hearken to this voice; I knew it not. But I now believe it was the Lord's secret voice upon my conscience. Upon reflection also I cannot deny that there were seasons when my heart melted in prayer, though I know not how to describe them, and feel the rather led to turn to the Lord for his multiplied pardon for all that is past.'

'In the year 1832,' she writes, 'I think I had a more clear token of the Lord's mercy to me than ever before. I was suddenly taken seriously ill. I did not feel any terror of mind as to my state. I knew that Jesus Christ was the only refuge, and I looked nowhere else for safety. I wondered why I could not rejoice in him, and asked the Lord what was the cause, begging him to remove all hindrances. There was a secret searching in my heart, and many exercises which I am not able to relate. I was also much engaged in prayer, especially for all my children, that they might be saved. After repeated struggles, the Lord did for one moment look down upon me, though it seemed but a glance and he was withdrawn. This verse in the 18th Psalm always brings this season to my remembrance, "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters." There is so deep an impression stamped upon my heart concerning this teaching that it cannot be forgotten. My own description of this manifestation, written down soon after it took place, is as follows:—I saw him, the man Christ Jesus; not robed in dreadful majesty; not seated on his throne of glory, with ten thousand times ten thousand standing round about him; not as an Almighty Judge, to condemn the guilty sinner—no: but I saw him as an Almighty Saviour, ascended on high, stooping to save a sinner lying prostrate at his feet; I saw him humbling himself to behold, and listen to the prayer of one miserable sinner, even as if there had been none but myself alone.'

In the latter part of her life, Mrs. Benson was very sensible of the blessing that is to be found in maintaining communion with those who are enabled to set forth the experimental power of religion, and was herself made a great blessing to many, especially to the poor of Christ's sheep in the neighbourhood in which she resided.

In drawing the first part of these Memorials to a close, it is fit that a tribute of praise should be raised to Almighty God, the Father of Jesus Christ, for the spiritual blessings which it hath pleased him to bestow, upon so many families, in him: and may it yet please him to continue his lovingkindness, by giving grace to us who remain to obey the gracious exhortation, 'Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger' (Zeph. ii. 3).

As the ministry of the late Mr. Burrell was directly or indirectly made a blessing to so many whose memorials are recorded in the foregoing pages, a few particulars of his history will be interesting to the reader, which cannot be given more concisely than by inserting the following epitaph, written to his memory:—

'In memory of Joseph Francis Burrell, minister of the gospel, born 1770, at Molsheim, in Alsace. In early youth, providentially rescued from a prospect of dangerous advancement in France, and devoted to the Romish Church, he came to England; where, convinced of sin by the strong hand of God, he was brought, on his first reading the gospels, to the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins, through the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the powerful application of the Saviour's dying words, "It is finished;" in whom believing, he rejoiced with unspeakable joy. In an age of erroneous and empty profession, divinely taught and sent, upheld in weakness forty years, he preached the word of God, its power and fulfilment, earnestly contending for the true faith of the ever-blessed Trinity and the Person of Christ: the fall of man, the redemption of the elect, their new birth, continual conflict, and certain salvation; and enforcing the fruits, inseparable from living faith, the fear and love of God. His ministry may be summed up in the apostle's words: "But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life:" and his life and death bore witness to the same. He died in peace, Oct. 20, 1853, in his 84th year. "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."'

PART II.

LETTERS,

NOTES OF SERMONS,

AND

DISSERTATIONS.

LETTERS.

SEVEN LETTERS WRITTEN BY BERNARD GILPIN, BETWEEN THE YEARS 1834 AND 1838, TO SEVERAL CLERGYMEN WITH WHOM HE WAS INTIMATELY CONNECTED.

LETTER I.

St. Andrew's Rectory, Hertford, *May* 1834.

HAD I been able to meet with you, when last you were in my neighbourhood, I should have conveyed to you a fuller, and so perhaps, in some respects, a different impression of the state of my mind, than I can by letter; but I will now do what I can. I was not aware of your visit to Town till after your return; but I suppose it was through Mr. Bickersteth chiefly, that you heard the reports to which you allude; and if he showed you my letters to him, I am not sorry. I believe I can only say the same things to you, which I said to him; nor can I speak less strongly. I then said that I felt and feared that an amazing degree of delusion existed in what is commonly called the religious world, from which the evangelical party in the church and prevailing sects of dissenters are by no means exempt—that there is a great deal of the theory of religion, and resting in the theory, but very little indeed of the inward experience. If a person who has been outwardly immoral or dissipated becomes the subject of serious convictions, this is very properly encouraged. The man is then taught that he is to close in with Christ, and depend on him, and so forth. When he thinks he has done this, or other people think so, he is too often encouraged, flattered, made a teacher of; and a continual round of outward duties, attention to public charities, &c., very very often becomes the whole of his religion. But now (people say) he is a Christian, he is not to feel doubts and fears, these would dishonour God: God is his Father: if he should be gloomy, he would discredit religion. Thus are persons built up, filled with presumptuous confidence, henceforth their whole religious life is an easy straightforward course: and almost the only temptations they are aware of, are temptations to some outward sin of the flesh; if they resist these they are well pleased, and can pray with great confidence; if they are in any measure overcome, in the same degree their confidence in praying forsakes them, and they are not easy, till some fresh duty engaged in, gives them a renewed hope that they are right with God.

thing I am sure of, that had I been left to my own will I should have turned away from the whole subject; and in fact I did turn away from it for many months, and had many very good reasons suggested to me for believing that my brother-in-law and his friends were wrong. I supposed they were in a measure Antinomians, because I knew many high Calvinists were so, at least in some degree; and I believe had I been able to substantiate this, or any other such charge against them, I should, notwithstanding all my professions of charity, have been heartily glad. .

But though I, at that time, would have rested where I was, my dear wife could not rest; for she had been, before I knew her, built up to a wonderful height of religion: but as all she had attained to had over and again been reduced to nothing, she had fallen into a kind of despair, attributing the fault entirely to herself. Therefore hearing her brother condemn the legal system of religion she had been taught, she was encouraged to hope that God had hedged up her way with thorns, not in judgment, but in mercy. And I was powerfully affected by the account she gave me of the simplicity and godly sincerity with which her brother's friends had treated her, and the very quiet yet strong manner in which they insisted upon it, as a certain truth, that her past religion had been only the counterfeit of the true. They only exhorted her to prayer for guidance: and it pleased God that I was myself powerfully excited to prayer, though without much hope.

When the power of these things first began to work in me the effects could not be hid. They obliged me to withdraw from taking an active part in many things, even some things in themselves good, which I would willingly have attended to had I been able. I can truly say I prayed most earnestly that what I was led to might be the right thing for me; and that strength equal to my day might be given me. . . . I have not hitherto found, though I know at any time I may, difficulty in answering those who oppose me in words; for it has seemed as if a very few words have affected them with a deep seriousness, and a conviction that I am right; yet insensibly they seem to get back again to the place they held before. In my preaching I have certainly, I thank God, been helped by him; for I felt bitterly my need of help, and I cried to him. I freely confess to you that I am seriously embarrassed with respect to continuing in the church. You will ask why? According to my present feelings, only on account of the occasional services, especially the baptismal service. I believe you know I never liked it, nor was able to enter into your views; and now I must say I do exceedingly disapprove of the doctrine it seems to countenance. Nor am I able to satisfy myself in continuing to use a form, in a solemn address to God, which I conscientiously differ from. Also the open communion is very painful to me. Persons *will* come whose whole heart revolts against the humbling doctrines of the cross, who only partake of it to their greater condemnation. . . .

I have already spoken of Romaine's letters. There is a small edition, recommended by Dr. Chalmers. But I mention it to ask you to read the 20th and 22nd letters 'to a friend,' which stand first. Also, may I beg you to read another thing which has powerfully struck me? what Owen says in effect in his Commentary on Psalm cxxx, on the fourth verse. The persons he opposes seem to be our high evangelical professors. 'Your faith has kept you from spiritual trouble, but it has not delivered you out of it.' But, above all these things, may it please God to pour out upon us both the spirit of grace and supplication, to enable us to bow ourselves to the uttermost, and to lie as low as he shall condescend to bring us. To pass over things too wonderful for us, so as not to be stumbled by them. To be made willing to learn even from babes and sucklings, if by them he deign to teach us. To consider neither our ease, nor our reputation, nor our avowed profession, but his will above all things, and the vastness of his mercy, an interest in which is worth worlds. If he make us sufficient, neither men nor devils shall divert us. If he leave us we shall be crushed before the moth. Also, can you find the letter which Luther wrote from his Patmos to Melancthon, respecting the wild enthusiasts who had begun to disturb Wittemberg, and endeavour to try all heretics and erroneous teachers by his searching test? . . . B. G.

LETTER II.

May 23, 1835.

. . . I FIND religion to be so very deep and close a work, the snares and delusions of the devil so many, the deceitfulness and weakness of my heart so great, that I am oftentimes afraid of counselling others, and oftentimes know not how I should be made to act and feel, were I in their situation. This much I can most truly say, that I was in a state of carnal security and deep ignorance of my own heart when we were together; and none suspected it, nor did I much suspect it myself. Religion did not seem to me great, nor did it seem to me that the power of God was really needful to bring me to it; but, though I acknowledged this in word, I was only guided by my own wisdom. I knew not what it means to work out salvation 'with fear and trembling;' for it is God that worketh both to will and to do. And I would say further (for I cannot say less), that every spark and degree of what seems to have been the true teaching of the Spirit in my heart, because it has really humbled and searched me, and brought a cry for mercy out of my heart, which in a little measure has been answered, seems to me utterly inconsistent with the doctrines of free-will. . . . You know what is said in the scriptures of God's presence, 'Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire.' I believe I have felt a little what that means, and found that the opinions and principles of religion and piety, which

I once supposed would stand, were all burnt up, and there was nothing left. I could then no longer talk of a rectified free-will; for whoever may have it, I had it not. I could not then talk of faith and repentance which were my work; for it was all rebellion, unbelief, and enmity. . . . I do not want to judge and condemn others; but we must all (if faithful) abide by the truth, and in proportion to our perception of the power and reality of any truth we must cleave to it. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this, I must add that I cannot lay any stress on the adoption of the form or theory of any one doctrine or system of doctrines whatever. It is not my holding these things in my understanding that can do me or anybody else any good; but, as I feel it, the life of religion in the heart requires them every one. That life is the great thing, the very Spirit himself, communion with God, the answer of God's love, the sense of Christ's blood purging the conscience, real humility, self-abasement, hope against hope, holiness in the whole spiritual nature, which discerns and abhors the entire and abiding sin of the whole carnal nature; and which, therefore, shows us our need of a most free and perfect justification before God, through the imputed righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith alone, in which the works of faith have no part,—and this doctrine thus felt in the heart, is the great rock, as Luther says. . . . Only there is not one of us who by wisdom can find out God, or find out how to serve him spiritually and acceptably: and the one thing for each of us is to cry for light, and then for strength to follow the light; otherwise we shall soon discover that we love darkness rather than light, and shall walk in darkness too. B. G.

LETTER III.

June 11, 1835.

I FEEL sorry and uneasy, because I have not sooner answered your pressing and very anxious letter; but several causes have held me back, principally my own critical position. For about the time your letter arrived, I also heard, as I expected must eventually prove the case, that the Bishop of Lincoln had accepted my resignation. I feel indisposed to endeavour to justify my own conduct eagerly, to those who would condemn me; but most anxious to pray for God's merciful direction in every step of my way, that he would not suffer me to trust in myself, nor to be left without some measure of that light of his reconciled countenance which alone can strengthen and comfort our hearts in situations so painful, so humbling, and, in a moral sense, so dangerous, as the one I myself am in at present. I also feel a great desire that this prayer may be answered, 'Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake.' Whether I be a fool for Christ's sake, or have made a fool of myself, I will not dispute; but the great practical question is, Can I as a fool, and either despised or

hated, keep fast hold of my profession? Can I make good what it is very easy to descant upon when we are at ease and the trial is out of sight—that a fool who trusts in God through Christ shall not be confounded? Can I say, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,' and take these trials thankfully from him without regarding so much the inferior instruments, causes, and consequences of them, as his overruling hand, seeing, whatever else may be designed by them, I am sure, if sanctified to me, they must bring me to feel more and more of my own unworthiness, and to pray in the full simplicity of the words of scripture, 'God be merciful to me a sinner?'

Do not be anxious for me; for I hope God will provide, first of all by making me content with a little. And if he really intend me still in a very humbling way to continue here and keep together a few sheep in the wilderness, I hope he will humble me to his hand, subduing that enmity of the carnal heart (of my own carnal heart) which mortally resists him, when the trial which touches the apple of our eye really comes, till he, by the coming of his grace, makes us say, 'Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.' . . .

I have a deep conviction that our doctrinal articles [of the Church of England] are scriptural, and I think I see eye to eye and feel heart to heart with such divines as Luther, Owen, Bunyan: I do not mean only in doctrinal points; but in their varied descriptions of the conflict, fears, hopes, joys, and experiences of the true believer; especially of the way they get out of their difficulties. But I cannot see the same in Arminian divines: justification, according to their statements, is another thing; sanctification is another thing; the atonement is another thing—thus their whole religion is different. I do not press speculative points, or care for them; but desire *that* religion should be mine which brings the whole of the doctrines of the scripture into real experience and life; and we cannot part with one which has been really so brought. . . . B. G.

LETTER IV.

Hertingfordbury, *August* 25, 1835.

. . . I FEEL no hesitation in saying that I believe the woman, whose case you related, was the subject of a most deep and real work of grace; which first taught her she was a sinner, and then, by the faith of God's operation, made her a saint. You say you have traced the progress of her conversion to as early a period as you believe it can be traced; and I would never attempt to trace her conversion further back, but the grace which ordained and effected it, as St. Paul does in Eph. i. 2–6, and that for a most important practical end. If we stand out against doing this, we certainly imply our belief to be, that man, in his natural state, has

some power, or merit of congruity at least; which view would be assuredly established, if the doctrine of foreseen election were the true one. But that this view of foreseen election is not true, but false, appears to me certain from scripture and experience both. How can a man believe it, who, when the Spirit searches his heart, is made to discern there enmity and only enmity, and enmity ever at work, except as opposed by a divine supernatural principle, which subdues the evil and makes him abhor it? Now it is this spiritual conviction of his fixed sin, which stops his mouth, makes him fall in the dust, and see the falsehood of that view of God which the carnal heart, (our Lord is witness,) will maintain to the judgment day: 'Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.' It is one principal aim of every one whose heart trembles at God's word, to seek for this humbling conviction, and for the continual maintenance of it; but the very entrance of it is opposed by the Arminian scheme, which represents us, not as condemned already, but only as condemned if we lack a certain attainable towardliness of our own making, which really becomes the turning point of our salvation; and the Father with his immutable will, the Son with his divine blood, the Spirit with his almighty grace are all held in abeyance by this phantom of a power supposed to exist in souls already dead in sin. Therefore this scheme appears to me to set us in a very proud place, which does not belong to us, and I am frightened at being found in it. I do not wish to say these things because I would oppose others, but, being by you urged to speak, I am afraid of dissembling what I feel convinced of as truth, lest God should turn away and not teach or uphold me, and then I should be undone indeed. B. G.

LETTER V.

Hertingfordbury, *Jan.* 22, 1836.

. . . SHALL I congratulate you on your brother's elevation to the peerage, and Mastership of the Rolls? As a man, I would. But as one who has obtained mercy of God to discern in a measure the depth of our heart's deceitfulness, and the subtle power which that enemy, the world, exercises over us all, I feel rather afraid. Many things which I once used to fear scarcely at all, I am greatly afraid of now; and, on the other hand, many things which once caused me great alarm and uneasiness, I feel no apprehension of now. I have much reason to thank God for what I have enjoyed since I came here, and for the testimony I have felt that it is good at all times to trust him, and commit our cause to him, not being anxious about consequences, nor of preserving our reputation amongst men, so only he enable us to walk day by day in his fear.

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER VI.

Hertingfordbury, *Feb.* 13, 1836.

I AM very sorry I have so long forborne to write in answer to your last note: the delay did not proceed from neglect, but from a feeling of the importance of what you requested me to do, and my own exceeding unfitness for the charge. For often, when I trust I may say that God looks upon me in mercy, I have a strong perception of the difference between his truth and the confusion and errors of men, which I can neither retain myself, nor convey to another, except as far as he allows me; and I think I know in some degree what Jeremiah meant when he said, 'O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' I am also greatly afraid of a disputatious spirit, and of seeing the mote in another, more clearly than the beam in myself. It is besides true, that error and truth are so jumbled together, through the wiles of the devil and the deceitfulness of our hearts, that in attempting to oppose the one and to defend the other, we may seem, and indeed more than seem, to oppose the truth and defend the error.

I must say I have long felt, and do feel, a great jealousy of resting in faith or obedience which merely respect the letter of God's word. I know what fearful danger we are in of being deceived by a fanatical spirit, therefore let us tremble and pray; but I know, on the other hand, that the real teaching of the Holy Ghost, if mercifully granted, will guide us not into error, but into truth; while he takes away the veil which is spoken of 2 Cor. iii, and makes us to understand that 'the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life;' while he applies the word, and makes it a piercing sword, a fire, a hammer to break the rock in pieces, able to consume the antichrist which is within us, and to slay the dragon which is in the depths of our carnal hearts. Now though we should say (and truly say) that the antichrist of 2 Thess. ii. 8 is Popery, or some infidel power to come; and that the dragon of Isaiah xxvii. 1 is some external enemy also; yet it still remains true that there is an antichrist and a dragon within us, against which, when we feel them, we must cry out for the sword of the Lord; and we must fall back upon such passages of the word as those are, and feel something of their personal application; and this will not be fanaticism, though all men, ignorant of the evil of their hearts, will call it so. If we see this, we begin to see also how it is that 'the letter killeth;'—for while men busy themselves about the letter, in defining systems of doctrine, codes of morals, expositions of prophecy, their whole time being devoted to religion, it becomes a sort of axiom in their minds that they are religious; while the word of God, as studied by them, keeps glancing against this sect or that, against Rome or the Inquisition; whereas the same light glancing inwards would discover analogous

evils there, and bring them down into the very dust, so that their mouth would speak out of the dust (Isa. xxix. 4); and there they would begin to understand God's mercy.

I believe this will apply to these words, 'Come out of her my people, that ye . . . receive not of her plagues.' Who is that Babylon? Popery I grant, and surely Protestant Popery also. Not this or that church or sect (that brings us back to the letter again), but the spirit, wherever found, which is ignorant of God's righteousness, which knows not the humbling cross, which exalts the creature, and degrades Christ. The word says, 'Come out of her.' Our wisest and most politic and most efficacious way seems to be to maintain some communion with her, and try to mend her, 'We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her;' and that, not out of policy, but for your own lives. 'Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul.' I can only testify to others what I have felt myself. When the word of God seemed first to kindle into life and speak to me, I began in real earnest to tremble. Though before that, I could say readily enough, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow the way;' I supposed, through the enemy's craft working on my most deceitful heart, that I was nevertheless tolerably safe, though my confidence in no degree was caused by the Spirit's witness. I could loudly cry out to others, 'Come out,' 'Flee &c.,' but I knew not what a denial even of my very self that coming out must prove. When I began to feel the necessity for this, almost all my religious friends took for granted I was certainly deluded, and the best excuse made for me was that I had become morbid in mind. I am sure I never before walked so tenderly, and with a more earnest desire to escape and to disarm misrepresentation; but I have found my only peace to be in proportion as by God's mercy I was brought down to receive all this as a needful trial from God, and to spell out Micah's words, for it is hard to read them, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause.' Now I could not help feeling that the whole spirit of that profession which was ignorant of that power in God's word which made me tremble, was a false, deceitful spirit,—one I dared not to join with. If persons know nothing clearly of God's work in themselves, nor of the progress of that work, and the visitations of his grace, and still are easy and contented, I must say, I am not so; and communion with them, as having one spirit, is at an end. The words 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate,' 'Flee *for your own lives*,' become very terrible to me; especially when I find that in proportion as I do not so come out, and flee for my life, I am entangled, darkened, spiritual death enters, I cannot at the time discern my loss, and in a spiritual sense I am well nigh overtaken with the dreadful snare described in the 7th chapter of Proverbs. That woman is the same seductive Babylon. She is more emphatically 'The mystery of iniquity' than when she sits upon the seven hills. For in this last position she has disgusted Christendom with her gross

wickedness, but in the former she has 'peace offerings' with her, and pays 'vows,' and uses 'much fair speech.' Wherefore if we are to 'come out' from the one, we are more emphatically to come out from the other. . . . B. G.

LETTER VII.

Bengeo, *April* 18, 1838.

I HAVE been lately occupied in carefully reviewing the way by which the Lord has led me, and I have found some encouragement in doing so, which has made me at times very grateful, 'for his mercy endureth for ever;' and I believe when we are enabled out of a full heart to testify this to others, especially if such are in sore affliction, the Lord blesses it for their encouragement, as well as our own, and we cry out in spirit together, 'O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.' While I write these words I am made to tremble, because truly this conflict must last as long as our lives on earth; but at times we find the snares broken, and we ourselves escaped as birds out of the fowler's net; or we see those spiritual enemies who kept us from peace overwhelmed like the Egyptians; which makes us both to believe his words, and sing his praise. But sometimes these times of refreshing do not come, and I get sorely wearied and discouraged; as one said of old, 'Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?'

Now I have often felt some stay at such times, and much instruction, from these words, The tree of life 'bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.' The fruits which this tree bears in the cold dark winter are not the same as those it bears when the flowers appear upon the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come; but God calls them fruits still. There are the fruits suitable for such a season, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.' 'Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made. . . . BE STILL, and know that I am God.' 'By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.' 'From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.' 'We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead.' 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.' These precious fruits, as it is said, Deut. xxxiii. 14. *margin*, must be 'thrust

forth by the moon,' because there is then no sun to enlighten and invigorate us. But there are many things which withstand this; and one is the sore pressure of guilt on our consciences through temptation, or by the cutting rebukes of the law. Our way appears to us so wholly defiled, and the intensity of our unbelief, rebellion, and carnal temporizing so exceedingly great, that we dare hardly pray; for (say we) 'we regard iniquity in our hearts.' I have found at such times, that the mercy of God is much nearer than I expected; and we must not despond, nor go on fighting the air, as though our arm could vanquish these sins, but very stedfastly look out for Christ. Is not this Luther's secret (or rather the secret of the Lord with him), which he details from the beginning to the end of his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, which was by God's mercy a blessing some years ago both to you and to me? The light to see our way, and the power to press forward to walk in it without stumbling, will come with Christ, not before him; as our Reformers knew and felt when they said, 'Go before us, O Lord, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help.' If all this were as clear in our hearts as it is upon paper, we should go on easily; but the whole of it is made to appear very confused and misty through the temptations of the enemy. For our spiritual life being small, and our faith like a seed, Christ comes in, not like the sun in his strength, but like the day star arising, and we are in danger of overlooking the light. The little hope, encouragement, softening, unction, love, which passed through us, was the beginning of Christ, but we rudely turned away, because it was not clear enough to satisfy us; we did not cherish it (he says '*Feed* thy kids'), but we took no notice of it, because our soul was vexed within us; and then we found an increase of darkness, Satan roared amain, and we became as a leaf driven to and fro with the tempest.

My dear friend, we must learn to watch better the signs of his coming; and it is never too late to begin; for though our backslidings have been many, the first thing he brings is healing. He shall 'arise with healing in his wings.' 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.'

I remember your great kindness to me, and the need I had of it, and the good it did me; and if it please God that we walk together, I am sure I must feel again and again the same need of it: and my heart is towards you that the Lord would bless you indeed and enlarge your coast, and that his hand may be with you, and keep you from evil, that it may not grieve you. And that he may grant the same divine blessing to your family, for there is no portion nor inheritance upon earth worthy to be compared with it, Mrs. Gilpin unites with me in every kind wish and prayer. B. G.

FIFTEEN LETTERS WRITTEN BY BERNARD GILPIN TO A MEMBER OF HIS CONGREGATION.

LETTER I.

St. Andrew's Rectory, *Nov.* 22, 1832.

HAVING long been partially aware of the unsettled and uncomfortable state of mind in which you have continued, I the more readily embrace the opportunity which late occurrences give me of addressing you in a serious and not controversial letter. Perhaps some things which I shall say may seem to you without foundation, but I earnestly request you will seriously lay them to heart, not without the prayer of David, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart,'—for you know well that it is written, 'The heart is deceitful above all things,' which is no less true than that it is 'desperately wicked;' and perhaps it may please God in his great mercy to make use of an instrument so unworthy as I am, in order to convey a portion of his grace and peace to one so sincerely anxious to find them, as I believe you to be.

You have long been anxiously seeking after truly spiritual religion; you have sacrificed much in order to find it; you have endeavoured to give up the world, and make the call of duty paramount to every other.

It is possible that at first you were well satisfied with yourself, that your own exertions pleased you, not that you presumed to express a hope of salvation except through God's unmerited mercy, but you felt pleased to think you were now well acquainted with your own sinfulness, and the power of the gospel of Christ; and this knowledge, together with your profession of it, and zeal respecting it, seemed to you proofs of solid piety, on which you rested with some degree of composure. Thus, while you intended to build all on Christ, and thought you were so doing, in reality you were building your hopes on yourself, and in heart departing from the Lord.

Real faith, real repentance, real self-despair and confidence in Christ are the blessed and peculiar gifts of God; they are utterly beyond our own reason or understanding; we must wait upon God to receive them, we cannot form them in ourselves; ministers, means, books, professions, works can never form them in us. It is not enough to say that we may have a great deal of external religion without them, for this we all know without being told; but I am well persuaded, (I speak this as my serious and deliberate conviction,) we may for years account ourselves spiritual Christians, and yet not have them:—not understand the fulness and power of these words, 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' God, I trust and believe, has in a measure taught you that we may thus deceive ourselves; and I trust further, he is still teaching you this lesson, in a way which you know not; by means which you cannot at present receive.

After a while you became dissatisfied and sorely perplexed in your mind. You laboured the more, read the more, conversed the more, listened the more; yet became more and more uneasy. Employments which once delighted you, became utterly insipid, if not distasteful; you could no longer reflect with pleasure on occasions when grace seemed to triumph over inward corruption; yet being conscious in yourself of very little humility, very little faith or patience, very little resignation or heavenly affection, your present no less than your past state of mind seemed to you unsatisfactory and hopeless. Now you should have remembered (or rather should yet remember) that all this dissatisfaction and uneasiness is perhaps a very first dawning of the true light within you; a very first experience of St. Paul's words, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.' You should also remember that the word of God speaks to you and says, 'Though it tarry, wait for it.' 'He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.' 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' Instead of which, like every other fallen child of Adam, you have been anxious to compass yourself about with sparks, and walk in the light of the fire of your own kindling. God has poured and will pour confusion on all your attempts; to bring you in his own way and time to his own grace and peace and light. . . . It is certain that Satan is now transforming himself into an angel of light, to divert you from the inward spiritual grace of God himself, to a world of debateable feelings, to litigation, opposition, and strife, to expect great things from new modes of worship or discipline, to think that some man or other, some sect or other, some form of opinion or other, may haply bring you to that state of mind to which no man, no sect, no profession, no might nor power, but 'my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts,' ever can, or ever will bring you.

You have innumerable objections; Satan magnifies them into wonderful stumbling-blocks; and if it suited his present design, he could show you also objections on the other side, and reduce you to a sore dilemma. Indeed, the human mind is most fertile in objections, in making them, in retaining them, in magnifying the force of them, in suffering itself to be diverted from good on account of them. And this is especially lamentable and fruitless when the objections are derived from the circumstantials of religion, not from religion itself. Whether we should kneel or stand at the sacrament; whether, in making those petitions and confessions which have been needful to every believer from the beginning until now, we should use the words of the minister before us, or those of the early reformers. It is the duty of all, and especially of persons in the private walks of society, having no responsible office in the ministry themselves, to remember that as religion consists not in the determination of such points, so their special duty is to separate religion in their minds from all these trappings, and view it in its high and solemn importance as the life

of God in the souls of men. This is the high and holy vocation whereunto God hath called you, to walk before him in love, letting your light shine before men to the glory of God, in unfeigned humility esteeming others better than yourself, careful above all things lest your conduct prove a stumbling-block to any, lest false zeal, or carnal wisdom which 'descendeth not from above,' tarnish the work of God in your soul, and make that likely to end in the flesh which seemed to begin in the spirit.

Besides which allow me to say, what at present you do not seem to suspect, that in your present state of mind, neither one change nor ten will satisfy you perfectly. You must at last be content (as others have been before you) in your religious connections to bear with many things which you do not approve, and with many persons whose walk is inconsistent with their profession; you must submit to leave objections uncleared, doubts unsolved, difficulties unanswered; to see the tares ever mingled with the wheat, offences brought in which our Lord says must needs come,—and so it shall be, till the 'times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.'

But in the meantime let us all beware, and I beseech you to beware, lest that come upon you which is written in the prophets, 'They shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it:' an awful prediction which derives additional force by comparing it with the striking declaration of Paul, 'The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above: or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.' On the whole I feel persuaded, that should God in his mercy dispose your heart to weigh these things seriously, you will feel much less confidence that you have been or are now right in your own views or decisions, much less eager desire that all things should be straight and to your mind in the religious community you belong to, much more desire to attend to the feelings of your friends, especially of your affectionate mother, much more fear lest you make others to offend, much more humble dependence on God for that divine grace, which however long delayed he will certainly give to all who are brought to die to themselves, and to cast themselves on the fulness of his mercy in Christ.

With my sincere prayers for your establishment in mind, by God's gracious light and wisdom imparted to you. B. G.

LETTER II.

Now you are unquestionably in the place appointed for you at present; and God has given you a charge to love, honour, and

succour one dear to you by natural relation. In so doing, you are exposed to manifold temptations; no wisdom of yours can either foresee, prevent, or overcome them: wherefore commit yourself to God, who preserved Daniel, queen Esther, and others, in situations still more critical and arduous.

But remember, if he have this mercy upon you, he will continually humble and mortify the rampant evil which works in you, as in all of us; and which the mysterious co-operation of his Providence and his Spirit will manifest to you more and more. How did he make queen Esther tremble even for her life; and turned Daniel's comeliness into corruption! You will find peace, hope, and consolation in falling lower and lower to the utmost: the tried gold of faith will so shine; others shall see it to the glory of God; but the Lord will humble you. B. G.

LETTER III.

Oct. 27, 1835.

I CAN truly say I sympathise with you in the trials you describe. I know not what advice to give you except that which I find hardest of all to put in practice, and yet the only effectual advice which any can either give or take. Fall down before God in secret, and endeavour alone to seek your direction and strength from him; freely confess your own blindness, ignorance, rashness, selfishness, and whatsoever sin besides is charged upon you. Do not think that other people can help you, much less those who have never themselves been deeply exercised to discover the right way. If you should be convicted of taking any wrong step, or a right step in a wrong manner and from wrong motives, do not imagine that your proper course is necessarily to retrace that step; but seek from the place where you are to know the will of God and wait upon him. The devil always has some plausible reason to give why we must hurry ourselves, and his object is to bring us into confusion. Pray that God would grant you the spirit of his holy fear, and it will preserve you from being in a confused hurry, though you may be called upon to act decisively. Do not encumber your mind with considering consequences; they are in God's hand, not in yours. Remember, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' True spiritual life will operate in us to wrestle for and obtain help from God, though in much weakness and with confusion of face. B. G.

LETTER IV.

Hertingfordbury, *Jan.* 11, 1836.

YOUR letter has caused me to feel much concern on your account, but it certainly has not in the least degree shocked me, or startled

me: those distressing conflicts with infidelity have been very common in the experience of all God's people in all ages.

Surely you do well in discerning that arguments addressed to your understanding will not meet the urgency of your case: many of Paley's arguments are good in their place, but their place is not as a shield to quench the fiery darts of the devil. You must fall low here, and confess your sin, and mourn in your prayer 'and make a noise,' and learn to say with Hezekiah, 'Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' Has not the Lord told you in his word already that the fool does more than doubt the doctrine of the atonement, for he says in his heart, There is no God? Be not cast down to despair if you should feel even the same, for that foolishness is bound up in your own heart. The hold which this temptation has upon you is in consequence of the leviathan of unbelief which is in your carnal nature, and the Lord will surely show you that faith is his own peculiar gift. Do not reason, and be not driven from prayer: the Lord can overcome all your doubts; and he most surely will, if he bring you to abject confession and the cry for his mercy.

I should particularly press upon you much communion with the people of God; nothing has a more direct tendency to expel those most fearful doubts: neither should you so give place to the devil as to think that because of these doubts you should keep away from the sacrament. Remember what happened once to two disciples who believed in their hearts that the Lord was dead and buried: Jesus 'took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them: and their eyes were opened, and they knew him.'

I earnestly hope it may please the Lord effectually to speak to the heart of your friend, and show her the infinite difference between her own application, either of precept or promise, and his. When she said, 'Rejoice evermore,' your spirit responded, 'Grieve evermore;' for the words were 'as vinegar upon nitre . . . songs to a heavy heart:' but when the Lord sends forth the power of that word to heal you, it will make your whole heart to ring with acclamation, and all heaven will ring with acclamation too, and that on your account. B. G.

LETTER V.

Jan. 16, 1836.

We unite in thanking you for your letter, and I trust we shall not only feel for you, but earnestly entreat the Lord to comfort you, to stand by you and strengthen you, to be with you in the furnace of affliction, for surely this is a fiery furnace to you. I must tell you how one sentence of your letter comforted me respecting yourself, 'I was thinking yesterday, that if I am one of God's people I shall be supported through all this.' So it is, that blessed hope,

which maketh not ashamed, springs up in the time of need; it is no daring presumptuous confidence, it cannot go further than the Lord's present influence allows; but this hope is like that faith which our Lord defines as less than all seeds that be in the earth, yet it becomes a great tree. 'The full assurance of hope' is folded up in that precious seed; cherish it, for its influence is to enable you to seek the Lord. Go to him all day long; the dreary solitude will not be dreary, if hope and faith and prayer with confession bring in but the least intimation of the presence of him in whose favour is life. We cannot always tell the meaning of the Lord's trials till after (sometimes long after) they are past. Trust him that he does all things well, and is very sensible of your necessity, and touched with the feeling of your infirmity. Surely that legal self-righteous heart which would keep us from prayer and believing, because a measure of our depravity is shown us, is one of the most desperate enemies of our peace. I know you are perplexed, for your feet are ready to slip, and the way before you is very dark. How can you act in the fear of God, and with spiritual discretion, as an affectionate supporter to one who requires such assistance, especially being greatly bereaved? Now may it please God to enable you to take my advice. Do not perplex your mind to find out how you can accomplish this; it is the Lord's gracious part to show you, and he is abundantly able. Only look to him, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved.' All hearts are in his hand, and all events under his control. He is not perplexed though you are; he knows the straight path for your feet, which shall bring glory to his grace, and is to you the way of salvation; and is it not written, 'The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein?' On the other hand, 'No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, . . . but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there.' Isaiah xxxv. Read it.

May it please God also to sanctify this great affliction to all who feel it. Mrs. Gilpin unites in very sincere condolence and sympathy.

B. G.

LETTER VI.

March 21, 1836.

I FEEL it is no easy matter to comply with your request; but I have prayed that I may not darken counsel by words without knowledge. I feel disposed to hope that your friend, of whose name and address I am ignorant, may have experienced in a degree the true teaching of God: and if the work be of him, it will stand for ever, and he will perfect it, and cause her to call upon him in the day of trouble; but he will show her great and mighty things which as yet she knows not (Psalm l. 15, and Jeremiah xxxiii. 3); for if I should describe her present state, even on the supposition I have made, I should say it is this, 'Thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.'

And sure I am, that day of trouble will come, that is, if she belong to Christ, for the trouble I mean is that furnace wherein the faith of God's operation will be tried and our own dross consumed. I would beseech her, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that she cry to the Lord for strength to stand in that trial, and commit her soul to his keeping; that she do not despise this warning because it comes to her from me; that she pray also to be enabled to know how very much the Lord implies in this word, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' I used to suppose I understood that well, and applying it to this or that system of human philosophy, thought myself beneath the notice of such a passage as that. But I found my terrible mistake; and the Lord, if he have mercy, will surely teach your friend the same to her amazement. It is true (as she says) we cannot judge the heart of another; but, if we have any experience of our own, we are in a measure able to judge by the fruits, and words are fruits as well as deeds. I have only her words. She says well, that the Bible is to be taken as a whole . . . the consolations &c. not slightly passed over. But I fear she is by no means fully aware how much she loses sight of the power of God's teaching here. For nothing in the Bible is of the least saving benefit except the Lord apply it; and we are not wise enough to judge for ourselves, what he should apply or how. May he be graciously pleased to apply such a word as this to her, 'Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.' We must separate well between our belief and our experience. My own certain belief is that the consolations of Christ are unutterably precious and satisfying, and to be diligently sought for; but my experience of them is yet but very partial. If the enemy will require of me a song in heaviness, I must needs answer, How can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land? but I do not thereby mean to deny that there is a song, which all the redeemed shall sing, yes, and sing it here too, when it pleases God, as in Psalm xl. 3. I am glad to find that your friend acknowledges that to lay hold on the promises presumptuously is dangerous: many scarcely acknowledge that there exists a danger here. I hope the Lord will increase this feeling, that it may become a living conviction in your friend's heart, fully commensurate with the 'fear and trembling' enjoined in Phil. ii. 12 on all true believers. But she adds, 'The Christian of all men has most cause for joy.' I answer, Yes, and for sorrow too; see Zech. xii. 10. 'But that which keeps him from the joy is often legal fear and unbelief.' I know it; and he must cry to the Lord for deliverance, and will be burdened till the deliverance be effected. I recollect in the Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan represents Pliable as saying impatiently to Christian, Come on, let us mend our pace: but Christian replies, I cannot; for I am burdened. Your friend acknowledges, and that scripturally, that the body of sin and death abides, and the carnal heart which is enmity:

these lust against the spirit. Therefore the subjugation of all this, the continual bringing down to a state of helplessness and utter insufficiency, which she also acknowledges to be needful, is a most terrible and sore conflict; it caused Job and David and Paul to cry out, and your friend will cry out in their words and with their feelings if the same Lord have mercy on her. Your friend speaks of the conflict as necessary; referring to Romans vii. I hope she will consider one point here. In the unregenerate heart there is often a conflict, as e. g. of reason against passion, or conscience against inclination. But the conflict described in that chapter is of another kind; it is of a will against another will, desire against desire; one whole nature against another whole nature. The former kind of conflict is intelligible without grace, and in some degree manageable without grace, and may so far cease that the person says, I felt it once, but now I have conquered. The latter is understood and maintained by God's power alone; his presence with the renewed nature, fighting against the devil's power in the carnal nature. This alone is the saving conflict, the life of which is 'all prayer;' described in Eph. vi. In speaking of the doctrine of election, your friend observes, 'I am quite sure had he not loved me first I should never never have loved him,' &c. This leads me to hope that the Lord has led her in a degree into the power of this part of the truth: if so, I am sure he will lead her in due time into the power of all other parts; for as she elsewhere observes, we must not exclusively press one point: and I know, if we have nothing but the theory of other doctrines, we have them not at all; we have indeed the letter which killeth, but not the spirit which giveth life. I hope I may say without offence that the following part of the letter contains little more than the theory. We may think so and so, and think rightly; but the apostle James says, 'Faith without works is dead.' Now the works of faith are not only the right external works, but the right experimental work too. The question is not, What do we think? but, Whereunto have we attained? In one sentence indeed she speaks of the doubts she has felt respecting the acceptance of her prayers, and the issue of these doubts, as follows, 'He seems to say, Not for you, for I hate sin, but for Christ's sake.' Now may I ask here, Have these doubts really pressed upon her? has she turned away from all flesh to God to answer them? has she been enabled in consequence, with Matthew, to rise up, leave all, and follow him? and has she had such an answer from God as the above sealed upon her heart? or has she only had her understanding enlightened, by the letter of the word, to return that answer? For the life and the light flow together with such an answer into the soul. The peace and the joy of the Lord comes with such real communion. But oh, the humiliation that attends it! The scorn also and contempt from men through which all who enjoy it must pass;—how are they hated of all men, but most of all by those who are high in the form and theory of the

truth, not knowing its power. How many are their sighs and their groans, and how great their poverty of spirit, till the Lord fulfil his word, 'Now for the comfortless trouble's sake of the needy: and because of the deep sighing of the poor; I will up, saith the Lord!' (Psalm xii. 5, 6. P.B.V.) B. G.

LETTER VII.

April 12, 1836.

I TRUST I am not unmindful of you daily in my prayers: unmindful I certainly am not, but I mean that I trust we pray in the unity of the Spirit, and he lays your care on my heart. I am sure you are sorely pressed by Satan, who strives to bring you into and to keep you in the chains of legal bondage. He suggests to you, there are some sins the existence of which in the carnal nature show that there can be no work of grace within. I answer, What sins? Has not the Lord said, 'From within out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.' Wherefore I say further, Be not afraid with amazement, (as the apostle expresses it,) to find that our Lord speaks true. But pray that you may make the Lord himself your fear and your dread, and so your confidence. The existence of the work of grace is shown in the discovery and the abhorrence of all this evil, in its urging us to flee to the blood of sprinkling. Your whole nature is defiled, therefore you must cleave wholly to Christ, and put 'no confidence in the flesh.' We are never brought to the real understanding of this, except, by the merciful though fearful light of God, we are made to say, 'We are before thee in our trespasses; for we cannot stand before thee because of this.' Your natural mind and affections are darkened, and alienated from the life of God; your natural will is corrupt, wholly at the disposal of the devil, so that you love evil as well as practice it. The discovery of all this is very fearful; if it were not, the grace of the holy God could not be the author of the discovery. The true cry is, 'O wretched man that I am!' but it leads on to this, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ.' May God enable you to rise from your heaviness, and to entertain a hope, which will encourage you both in private and public prayer. . . .

I entirely enter into your feelings respecting private prayer. Public prayer also, as well as family and social prayer, as far as they are rightly exercised, are greatly blessed as means of grace: and the Lord hath said, 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' Nevertheless in religious communion with one another, I feel it not profitable, but the reverse, to follow any strict rule, as of necessity. I am often much more disposed to read such parts of God's word as seem opened to my mind with a

Christian friend, lifting up my heart in silent prayer for a blessing on both, than I should be in a more formal manner, first to pray aloud, then to read in a more regular course. I could often do the former and not the latter at all; and I really believe that the Holy Spirit, who is the God of order, disposes the heart in his wisdom to a reverent order in public worship, more freedom in family or social worship, and often helps our infirmities in private prayer with groanings which cannot be uttered; and which would neither be edifying nor becoming in the presence of another.

If I may be forgiven for speaking very freely, (for I hope it is only in the fear of God I speak, not wishing to meddle with matters which do not concern me,) I will say, May it please God to enable you to take heed of besetting sins, sins which we may call constitutional if we please, but grace must subdue even them. A certain degree of obstinacy in another, and irritability in you, are when mixed together like vinegar upon nitre. If you should be blind, Satan is not, and will make the most of such an advantage. Therefore, Be sober, and watch unto prayer. We call by softened names, sins, on account of which shame and confusion of face belong to us; the failings I have mentioned are different effects of the same sin:

> 'Tis pride, accursed pride,
> That spirit by God abhorred.'

To fall under a charge, and confess our own sin, without caring to allege extenuating considerations, well befits all those who know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It mortifies pride; it is a clearing the way for the Lord's peace in the conscience, which none but sensible, broken-hearted sinners effectually know; it produces unity of heart instead of bitterness one with another; it removes many stumbling-blocks out of the way of those who are weak; it stops the mouths of lions, and all false accusers; it is a mark by which the world will see the power of grace, especially in such as have in past time acted in a contrary spirit. May it please God to grant that his word may distil like the dew into our hearts, to teach us these things in their power. . . . B. G.

LETTER VIII.

Jan. 20, 1837.

It is a very great advantage to us personally, whoever we are (provided the grace of God be in us), to converse with such as fear God. I know the true disciple of Christ is never above learning: I am sure all such, if enabled to teach, will be most willing to learn. Words cannot describe how tender we shall be made, of and for one another, as far as the hand and unction of the Spirit are mutually felt. Indeed, we owe a tenderness, kindness, and forbearance to all; but the tenderness we feel in the unity of the Spirit with any, is of another kind: for it results not from the fear or love of man, but

from the fear and love of God and Christ. We are subdued before the Spirit himself, dwelling and walking in such; the truth and righteousness being so revealed by his influence, which goes from faith to faith. We are all little children in his hand, the highest is lowest before him; the wisest sees his own ignorance the most; the purest in heart sees most the impurity of his fallen nature. 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?' Is not 'his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet?' Therefore we do not go to others, to lead him, or to teach instead of him, or to comprehend his infinite work; but if we have received mercy ourselves, we go as sent by him, as workers together with him; which we never can be without his grace in our hearts. Then also we begin to feel what the communion of saints really is, which David calls brethren dwelling together in unity. Oh, how incomparable, as David says, as the ointment which it was death to imitate; how purely spiritual, and how it pervades the whole mystical body of Christ, from the head to the skirts of the clothing! Standing here, we are one; and have all things spiritually in common. We confess our faults one to another, and we pray one for another. We say, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' I thank God I understand a little of the depth, and truth, and substance of these things now. But I know, indeed I daily feel, how great the subjugation of all we have and are by nature is, to bring us to, and to keep us in this state. How another kind of unity is ready to come in. How a root of bitterness begins to appear; self-exaltation, envy, grudging, sometimes leading us to eat our morsel alone, at other times to take away another person's. It is easy even to abase ourselves and exalt others in pride and vanity. Now if enabled, at the times of such perversions, to watch and discern our own hearts, we shall find man, not the Lord, uppermost in our regard. God grant that discerning this, by deep confession and earnest prayer, we may find his ready help for Christ's sake.

I have written these few thoughts to you, having much hope that it pleases God to teach us both these same things; but we sadly mar and as it were interrupt his teaching. Yet, if he begin, he will finish the work; humbling and convincing us of our sin more and more; so that the anointing which we have received of him shall abide in us. B. G.

LETTER IX.

Bengeo, *May* 19, 1837.

How is it possible we shall ever be cleansed of our leprosy, if we refuse to wash in this Jordan? I am sure you have reason to look into God's word again, not in your own wisdom; and not only to think but pray over those things I endeavoured to set before you on

Monday last. Your conversation and subsequent letter are to this effect, 'We must be partly healed before we look to the Brazen Serpent.' Oh, be assured the enemy has persecuted your soul and taken it, and would make you to 'dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead!' Is it to be wondered at that you should find no victory; that you should be a prey to the Legion within you as within us all; that the precious oil should break your head, which ought to be as the dew of Hermon and Mount Zion, and as the ointment that descends to the hem of our great High Priest's garment? (Psalms cxli and cxxxiii.)

Now once more let me say, you must let go all that wisdom, reasoning, judging of your own case: you must fall down lower and say, Let it be thy pleasure to deliver me. You must not look aside to the right or left, but to the cross of Christ alone, who came to seek and to save the lost: so only you shall be saved. Oh, that these irruptions of evil, clouds of darkness, this armour of self-righteousness, which fences you against the arrows of the Lord, might be made, by God's mighty power, subservient to bring you down as the chief of sinners to his footstool!

So prays, and hopes to continue to pray, both for you, many others, and himself, B. G.

LETTER X.

Nov. 6, 1837.

The state you describe, and which appears so fixed a one, is certainly very far indeed from that to which you must be brought, if really through grace a partaker of Christ. I dare not flatter you, nor conceal the searchings of heart which the hearing and observing these things occasion to me. I cannot but think that I spoke to your case yesterday morning, and feel very desirous that by God's mercy you may be enabled to lay some things I said to heart; and I am sure, while I spoke them, I felt much conviction of my own sin as well as of theirs who heard me. The sentence in my sermon I refer to, I will give here a short abstract of:—Some have been really in a measure enlightened to discern the truth, and been brought out from entangling and alluring forms of godliness: but they are seeking (though covertly) their own honour, ease, and pleasure yet; and God resents it. They seem to desire luminous and influential views of Christ; they desire to be made acquainted with the forgiveness of sins, &c.; but I still know, with St. James, they have not, because they ask not: they ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts. The gratification of carnal or spiritual pride; deliverance from fear, that they may enjoy themselves at ease; these are some of those secret lusts. If they say they have not these evils in their hearts, I am sure it is because they are blind; if they see they have them, they will add, How can we help them from coming in? I answer, How

indeed? Not by yourselves: wherefore this shows your dire necessity of understanding both David's prayer and the continual answer to it, 'Lead me in the way everlasting.' And I say further, if you begin to be led in this way, your own wisdom and prudence will be exceedingly confounded, that you may learn to prove the truth of Peter's words that God's renewed people are kept by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. I say of these I now speak of, that they have by no means attained to an understanding of the depth of the practical influence of a real entrance into the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Occupied perhaps you have been for a time, in considering the difference between one system of doctrine and another; but if the real faith has been in any measure received, this little leaven must proceed to leaven the whole lump. Now are your constitutional sins, your failings in temper and conversation, the covetousness, pride, jealousy, or moroseness of your innermost spirit, laid hold of by the judgment of God, and now your religion must prevail, through his might and spiritual life, to overcome these sins, or they will overcome you. Here, however, you are held in darkness and bondage; for God will not dwell with reigning sin. The enemy is afraid of this sanctifying power of the truth, and strives to bring it into disgrace with professors, by insinuating that it is all legal; but the Lord knows that, apprehended in the Spirit, it is the reverse of all that is legal; for it is even this, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.'

B. G.

LETTER XI.

Bengeo, *April* 27, 1838.

I FEEL anxious to write to you one short line in reference to our yesterday's conversation; for it seemed to me as though you had in a little though real measure experienced the fulfilment of Prov. vi. 22, 23, respecting the effect of continual attention to the Lord's word, 'When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.' I was the more encouraged to hope so, because of the spiritual discernment that came with the comfort, for that description of Hart's, relative to the soul coming out of itself into Christ, was made very clear to you in that light.

Now may I beg you to be exceedingly cautious here. Do not believe every whisper that will be injected by the enemy to make you question this mercy. Do not let him make you repent that you came and told me of it: but set your heart in deep confession to seek the Lord Jesus Christ, and to honour him by praise (Psalm l. 23), for condescending to show you a glimpse of the skirts of his glory; for this unfolding of the truth in our hearts, by the secret power of

the Spirit, is very glorious. Moreover, you may depend upon it, that all the light and encouragement you have received you will require, in order to meet some trials before you, whether outward, inward, or both. Therefore, except you watch, your loss will be great here. I know not which is the worst extreme—to neglect God's comforts, set light by them, and reason them away; or to be puffed up and made secure by them. Except you follow up these little intimations of grace, (acknowledging all day long that you can only pervert them if the Lord leave you to yourself, but entreating him for Christ's sake to lead you on in his spiritual way, seeing it always pleases him to have mercy on those who are sensible of sin and therefore needy,) except, I say, you do this, you will find that the light will leave you, and the clouds gather again more thickly; and instead of finding your way established, you will be as 'a leaf driven to and fro.'

There are some of Christ's family who by an incautious, unbelieving spirit, that only goeth out by a prayer and fasting they never attain to, are kept in a state of nonage all their days, to whom the apostle refers in many of his epistles, charging his own converts that henceforth they be no more such. Pray attend to this in very earnest prayer, remembering the word of the Lord, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.' B. G.

LETTER XII.

Bengeo, *August* 18, 1840.

. . . 'BEHOLD, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.' Now, I say, in the very darkness in which you are, the Lord may stand behind that wall of separation, and make you believe that word: and if so, you will fixedly, however feebly, entreat his mercy; and this faith will prove a small earnest to you that you shall not seek in vain. For he acknowledges that there is a separation, and that he will not at present hear; saying, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.' Now this separation and darkness must be taken away by Christ; you and I cannot take it away. But the sanctified effect of it is to bring us to a deeper knowledge and feeling of our awful sins, and I do entreat you to take heed to your spirit; for you say, 'I do feel my sin,' whereas still the darkness remains, which is the Lord's proof that you do not as he is pleased you should. Hence you imply that the outward breach ought to be healed, and there the enemy finds his advantage over you. I wish it were in my power to convince you of the danger of standing on such ground. For indeed the repairing of the outward breach must follow this, not go before it, or I am sure the dispensation will not be blessed to your spiritual profit. Are you not sensible that I also, as well as yourself, feel this

trial most keenly? Try sometimes if you can pray for me, that the Lord would direct and strengthen me in his fear: and who knows but such a prayer may bring down a blessing upon your own soul, and light in your dark way? It is my great desire to comfort you, for I feel greatly for you; but when the Lord neither sanctions nor seconds our endeavours what shall we say? Let us both say, or earnestly entreat to be enabled to say, 'Abba, Father! If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done.' This will be no sign of his final displeasure either against you or me, but the very contrary. B. G.

LETTER XIII.

Bengeo, *March* 20, 1842.

I DO not know the present state of your mind, but I hope it may please the Lord to make this communication with you of some benefit. You have been grievously driven with temptations, yet I hope the time will come when the Lord's sword will slay the enmity, and grant you a deliverance for Christ's sake. I think I am not wrong in saying that one of the great sins for which God, (in mercy I hope,) contends with you, is because you have paid so little regard to his word in your heart. . . . God is a great king, he will have us to tremble at his word. You must be brought to his feet by one of his sharp arrows to cause you to cry for mercy. The Lord enable you to feel this heavy burden and bondage of rebellion against the Lord, and cause his word of divine compassion to enter, which was our subject this morning. 'The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.'

Oh, that he may grant you a real spiritual discernment, without which you will only be driven from one error to another! B. G.

LETTER XIV.

Bengeo, *March* 31, 1849.

. . . I FOUND some power and hope, by God's mercy, in the subject of my last evening's preaching, which was the first three verses of the 17th Psalm, 'Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry, give ear to my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips,' &c. I am sure we none of us can attain to that holy confidence in prayer, except through the power of a divine faith uniting us to the Lord Jesus Christ as our covenant head. He alone, in the fullest and entirest degree, thus prayed for himself and his people in him, in the days of his flesh; and without any doubt, found such words as these are, a blessed stay to his soul, in the anguish of the battle he

sustained against the devil and all his hosts. His cause was most righteous, for he came to fulfil the whole will of God, as he says, 'I am content to do it, yea, thy law is within my heart' (Psalm xl. 10. P. B. V.) He was the captain of our salvation made perfect through suffering: therefore let none of us, if we are quickened to follow him in the regeneration, either complain of suffering, or expect exemption from it. Our cry must be day and night, 'Lord, increase our faith;' no natural faith, but the faith which is born of God, and therefore overcometh the world. All our spiritual weakness and disease comes by the absence of this holy principle of heaven-born faith, the free gift of God. When it comes into the heart as a grain of mustard seed, it engages us to look through trouble and temptation, through the snares and bands of a corrupt world, through the darkness, fretfulness, wounded pride, and earthly-mindedness of our own corrupt hearts, to Christ the first and the last. His obedience and blood-shedding must atone for all, the mantle of his righteousness must cover us, the Spirit of God must freely take of his things, and show them to us. He must help our infirmities in prayer, and then behold we can pray ourselves, even as Christ prayed, 'Hear the right, O Lord,' i. e. it is quite right that we, through this mighty mediation of Christ, should be succoured, and delivered from all our sins and spiritual enemies. 'Attend unto my cry,' even the cry 'day and night' which is brought out of the heart of God's elect. 'Give ear unto my prayer.' . . . [*Not complete.*]

LETTER XV.

[*No date.*]

THOUGH I have long delayed writing, the reason has not been that I have forgotten your request, which indeed your own letter put me in mind of, but chiefly the tried state of my own mind, for I could not realize a hope that my writing would be profitable. It is now about nine months since I may date the beginning of this especial time of inward trial, and I have reason to deplore with shame my want of improvement under the discipline. I seem indeed very often obliged to acknowledge with fear that instead of improving, I go backwards; but at times, (as I have unexpectedly found this morning,) I find a change in a measure, wherein faith and hope venture after all to believe and expect that the end will bring a blessing. As you are at present destitute of the preached word, I will endeavour, while the influence is warm on my heart, to direct you to the 1st chapter of James, that you with me may seek for the divine power to accompany that most precious exhortation.

Let all the scattered children of God, of all tribes, give ear. Do not, like the children of this world, rejoice in carnal ease, but rejoice in all your temptations and afflictions; discerning (while you continue stedfast in confession and prayer) that the trial is doing you good, making you sensible of your need of patience, and so obliging you

to cry for it to Christ who gives it. Yet do not think this work will be all perfected at once, it is a slow and gradual work. Now when your heart fails, and you feel yourselves destitute of all wisdom, ask of God; he surprises such by his tender and liberal way of giving wisdom. Not as the world giveth, does he give. But ask in faith, nothing wavering; if indeed you waver, do ask for the faith, that you may be stedfast though you are weak, and though the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the flesh has no faith in it, and he who is only in the flesh receives no answer from the Lord. Beware of a double mind, of a divided heart, of holding to God and to mammon both. You, my brethren, who have been for a long time brought low, tempted, despised in the world, made of no reputation, rejoice when the Saviour turns and shows that he regards your low estate, and gives you power to rejoice in his glory: and, on the other hand, you, my brethren, who have been in a prosperous and flourishing state, and have enjoyed success in this world, or the flowers of a happy religion, not knowing how the corrupt nature has presumed and been puffed up through this prosperity, rejoice when all your flowers are cut down and wither, and the scorching sun makes all to fade away, so as to leave you no object to admire except you find Christ only. Blessed is the man who endures the trial; not the man who is untried, nor yet the man who faints under the trial. Know that every fresh victory will bring the earnest of the crown of life, which is promised to all who love the Lord.

But in your trials you are in danger of falling into self-pity and rebellion. Oh, beware of this! though you feel it, confess it, and let the power of the truth sink into your heart. The Lord is without fault, holy and righteous, the fountain of grace and of all perfection and of every good gift, but your heart is a den of corruption, concupiscence is continually working to bring forth sin, and the issue of sin unpurged is spiritual and eternal death. Do not err, my beloved brethren—errors abound and are deadly—stand in awe, and remember there is no foundation strong enough to abide the trial, except that of sovereign grace only. The new birth is not the issue of man's corrupt will, but of God's eternal will: the instrument of this change is the word, wherefore reverence the word. Be swift to hear it, but when you find temptation, corruption, and bitterness within, be slow to speak, and be afraid of anger in all its kinds. Be afraid of angry zeal, it is only a cloke of pride and malice, it never works God's righteousness. It is only where the Spirit works meekness, and all our own fleshly rags are turned away from, that the word becomes spirit and life in our souls, able to save. This entrance of the word will seem powerful in the hearing of it, but the fulfilling of it in the times of temptation is always hard. Do not flatter yourselves that all is right because you have only heard well. Many in the hearing of the word are made to see what they are like, and yet forget all in the conflict. Those who abide, are truly brought through the dread of the killing letter of the law, to

find Christ the fulfiller of the law, and the law becomes the law of liberty in him. Whosoever continues therein, shall be blessed in his deed. Remember the charge given before, that you be slow to speak. For whoever has an unbridled tongue, deceives his own heart, and his religion is vain. True religion humbles and meekens the heart, and so works love and unity with the poor and afflicted children of God; and such will always be enabled to overcome the spirit of the world.

I desire to pray that the practical power of these exhortations may be found in our hearts. In my present condition I am greatly cast down, and fear for many of the little assembly over whom I am a most unworthy pastor. I cannot wonder when I consider what I am, to find they are also many of them weak and sickly, some I fear to death. But the only good Shepherd will not suffer his own to be lost, though he allow them long to lie 'among the pots.' He will one day say to such, 'Ye shall be as the wings of a dove.'

B. G.

TWENTY-FOUR LETTERS WRITTEN BY BERNARD GILPIN TO SOME OF HIS RELATIVES.

LETTER I.

Hertingfordbury, *Dec.* 1835.

To speak to a person in your present situation is very difficult; I have felt my own incompetency much more than I can express to you. Yet allow me to state a very few reflections which I have often wished to convey in a more direct manner; though very trifling in themselves, they are important in connection with religion.

Why are you in doubt as to the professional occupation you should engage in? Is the hesitation human or religious? If the former, it is easy to say that your natural talent and inclination sufficiently settle the question; if the latter, the case becomes a very serious one, alike beyond yourself and others to settle. This is what we cannot understand, except by some measure of that faith of God's operation by which we endure 'as seeing him who is invisible.' In a fleshly profession of religion, which is at this day so fearfully common, men presume they can carry their religion about with them, and that it is no matter where they are, or what they are engaged in. But I know this is wrong. I know the way of life is not in ourselves, and that in consequence we cannot discover spiritual matters from temporal. Our whole course must be ordered by God, and the most important results in some hidden manner seem to

depend on trifles. The certain influential feeling of this is calculated to keep us in fear and in much perplexity; in which state, if the grace of God operate, we shall be led, in weakness, in discouragement, in confusion, in a sense of unworthiness, just to confess and to cry to God, and to reject the POISON of that easy self-confident presumption, passing with many for strong faith, which insinuates itself like oil into the very depths of our own hearts. In all this labour and dissatisfaction it is shown there is life in our spirits, a restless looking for God: 'Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!' I know that the way is hard, and indeed impossible to the flesh, and by the experience of this we are brought to feel that what carries us on is the power of God in us, not our own power. And the end is that we learn to trust in God; which is where we begin notionally, but the reality of the faith is a very different thing from the notion.

I am sure we must be made to perceive it needful that we hold all things at the hands of God—our income, our domestic peace, our children, our reputation. I was going to say the last is the hardest to a wretched sêlfish sinner, but I suppose any one of them may prove the hardest.

Surely God is able to teach you, and enlighten you, and save you, and keep you from the evil, in any line of occupation in which he may call you. But I have felt in my own case, and therefore feel in yours, the terrible danger we are in of acting Cain's part, who 'went out from the presence of the Lord,' and built cities, and I know not what besides. What is it to do this in your case or mine? There is the question. To act in a legal spirit of fleshly mortification, will expose us to the danger on the one side; to plunge headlong into a worldly occupation which is more grateful to our carnal hearts than heaven, may expose us to the danger more. Wherefore I say if this fear in you be a godly fear, cherish it more than your life. Try if you can believe the 3rd chapter of Proverbs, or rather I should say, Cry for God's free gift of faith. It is hard enough for any man, most hard for those who have talent and understanding to lean to. If God enable you to esteem the reproach of the cross greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, though you may be considered by the world a fool, and feel like one, for giving up your worldly interests, the advantage you will thereby derive, if maintained with prayer, will be very great: and therefore God sends it; not without cause, though at the time we cannot always perceive the benefit of it.

But now may I say further that, as the prize of a divine calling is very great, God certainly will lay us low if he set it before us. We shall meet with many drawbacks and many stumbling-blocks, sufficient to stumble us that we should fall, except he hold us up. Let us not be offended when these come, but rather expect them, and not be afraid to ask for help from God to keep us from falling. On many occasions our best way will be to keep silence before men,

and secretly thus look up to God. Those who sincerely fear God, will understand our reserve if it be really in spiritual discretion. I should particularly urge this upon you in reference to every kind of philosophical enquiry and scruple which either directly or indirectly bears on religion. The Spirit of God, our only effectual helper, will stand aloof from us, leaving us to wander in very comfortless darkness, while we *will* settle all disturbing points, and make a smooth way for our faith; and the tempter knows the advantage he thus gains, and helps forward the confusion amain. But if we can obtain help from the Lord, to seek first his righteousness and the salvation of our souls, he will unite us in spirit and affection to those who fear him, both small and great, and apply to us spiritually such things as are consistent with his mind and will; and if he see fit to mortify our natural talents or learning, and keep us in a despised place, our benefit in the end shall more than compensate for all this. Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER II.

August 9, 1836.

. . . I FEAR that there is something yet lacking, not searched out, not altogether right in your spirit, too light, though uttering true things, and though embracing a wide compass (the conflict and the victory, the fear and the confidence, the bondage and the deliverance), yet not with deep savour, nor altogether in simplicity. The reasons of these defects I could more understand provided there were darkness and contraction of spirit felt and deplored; but to find or fear this savour and simplicity lacking, yet an acknowledgment at the same time of the holy anointing like fresh oil, makes me fear lest the enemy should beguile us, lest your own soul should suffer loss if the hay and stubble be not consumed, and a light confidence be generated in some others in consequence. For such is the deplorable consequence of that evil which remains even in the regenerate, it may at any time do harm to others, though the little precious seed of divine grace, latent (as I trust) within us, may not have the energy at present so to be manifested as to enable others to glorify God, or to kindle a kindred fervour in another's heart. You know 'the glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley shall be as a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer' (Isa. xxviii. 4). And you know, what I believe I read with much fear and trembling for myself the morning I just sketched this letter, and indeed it partly urged me to write, 'They took either of them his censer . . . and offered strange fire . . . And there went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified.' . . . Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER III.

Oct. 31, 1887.

I AM on my way to the house of a small country farmer where I am engaged to preach this evening, and having fallen between the time of two coaches, and nearly two hours to wait at Puckeridge, where I am, I desire to improve the time by writing to you, which I have long wished to do. Indeed, I blame myself greatly for my neglect; it seems as if it arose from indifference to one so dear to me as yourself; but I trust, dear sister, the Lord will enable us to find him a very ready and present help in time of trouble; one who never leaves his church, but is truly with them always, even to the end of the world, and therefore to be found of all who seek him, even to this day. Your last letter to our dear sisters M. and C. I read, and it quickened my desire to write this, because I hoped from it that you are not suffered to faint utterly, though your strength is small and the hindrances great, but find a little power to strive to enter in at the strait gate. I find it hard striving, and can therefore sympathise with you. The main difficulty lies in learning how to strive lawfully, for there is no end of vain legal striving, which only tends to keep us back instead of furthering us. I must say, to the glory of God, that he has been very gracious to me, giving me by slow degrees a clearer understanding of the nature and power of true religion; and though my path is by no means smooth, that sweet living, spiritual, reviving hope, which the very shadow of his spiritual presence gives, is better than the whole world. Not that I can always say so, I often sink lower than I used to sink, but I find afterwards that through mercy I also rise higher; that is, I mean to say, my fears are deeper, and my consolation at times clearer. So I find we are never to give up looking out for the good Shepherd, who gathers his scattered Israel in the cloudy and dark day. Truly I can see cause to call this a cloudy and dark day in reference both to myself and you; for much of the apparent light which shines is worse than darkness, as I have proved.

The point I wish to press upon you is this. Do not keep looking at nothing but the difficulties and darkness you feel. Come day by day, and if possible all day and night too, to Jesus Christ, in the spirit of free prayer. I always find I must begin with a deep confession. For perhaps I feel at the moment the rising of some evil desire, pride, covetousness, hardness of heart, or unbelief. We cannot move these first that we may pray well; but we must lift up a feeble cry acknowledging all these, and whatever evil besides is felt by us. That text in the 66th Psalm, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,' has been a sore stumbling-block to many of God's children, because they have not understood it. For they have said, 'I feel pride, lust, envy, enmity, worldly love, regard to my own credit, ease, and honour, &c., wherefore surely the Lord, according to that text, can never hear me.' Now the secret is this. If God's light be in our souls, we shall always

truly discern, and that with fear, the existence and power of all these evils in our hearts. But that heart which cries for help, pardon, and salvation, is the new heart, which being the work of the Spirit, has no evil in it. In the time of temptation, or ordinarily while we are very young in grace, we can scarcely, if at all, discern the existence of this new creation within us; and this is the cause of many of those dark bewildering fears and conflicts through which we must pass. But we shall always find it good, through them all, and through all suggestions to the contrary, to continue crying to God with confession, which is the very direct way out into that wealthy place which David describes in the next verse, 'Verily God hath heard me.' I cannot tell you how the truth and the importance of finding that distinction between flesh and spirit within us has grown upon me for the last year or two, so that I often feel I should really despair without it. And I am sure this is that which Hezekiah felt when his fierce temptation broke away, and he turned to the wall, and put the Lord in remembrance of the perfect heart. You will find this also insisted upon throughout the scriptures: Psalm cxix. 1, St. John's First Epistle, what St. Paul says respecting the new man created in the image of God, are all full to this point. But it is no use to learn it in the head, but to keep crying that we may be guided into the power of it by the Spirit of truth is a most effectual and blessed means of learning that secret of striving lawfully; for it does really bring us to make and to find Christ all in all, as in a measure I am enabled to prove. If you wish to see this subject stated by others, I think you will find the 46th letter of the reformer Bradford full to the point.

Nov. 1. Thus far I wrote yesterday at the inn. Afterwards I went on to Sandon, where I preached. I have been much encouraged respecting the people to whose house I went. . . . Yesterday when I set out, I felt very little light or comfort in my own heart; but during my walk to Puckeridge I was enabled to wrestle at times very earnestly; and afterwards I found a strength and power in meditation on these words, 'The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.' I saw that as it was in the material creation, so it is in that new creation of which all who are saved are the subjects: God commands the light, therefore the light comes, and the light is very good; but it makes the darkness visible, and discovers the empty, desolate, deadly condition of our own natural hearts. Here then we shall not rest satisfied; 'after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.' We must press through all these fearful discoveries of sin and death within us, even to the full and spiritual apprehension of Christ himself, and then we have not light only, but the light and the life both. 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.'

The manner in which these things were secretly urged upon me while I prayed, made me take that passage from the 1st of John I have just quoted for my text; and though I began to preach in much weakness, I had a little light and power granted me before I had finished; and I hope my labour will not prove in vain. Oh, dear sister, may you and I, with many more, be enabled to seek the Lord diligently, (as Israel is described in the 9th of Nehemiah, they separated themselves, even with 'earth upon them,') for we cannot claim this mercy from the Lord; but the humble seeker whose cry is, 'Let it be thy pleasure to deliver me,' shall never cry in vain.

I liked your little account of two of your poor neighbours: I hope the Lord will be with them in their afflictions, and enable them to endure to the end, and to prove the efficacy of his great word as applied by the Spirit to themselves as well as to the apostle, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Your affectionate brother, B. G.

LETTER IV.

August 19, 1838.

I RETURN you Mr. Bourne's letter. . . . I cannot yet find time to answer your letter to me, which I was very glad to get; but I intend to write to you while at Norton. I can give you no advice more pointed and suitable than Mr. Bourne. This fear of the Lord, if it be put into us, will abide, and carry us through all difficulties. It is his own gift in the covenant, 'I will put my fear in their hearts.' It is encouraging to be made to desire it, for it will come if it be enquired for: as I remember Mr. Nunn says, 'One thing I have observed—whatever we cultivate, grows.'

My discouragements have been as many and as great as you describe, and they yet are so. For the deadly nature of sin, the body of corruption and unbelief, causes to the very end all such legal darkness and blindness at times; yet I beseech you do not think of waiting till you know Christ clearly, before you begin to make use of him. This is, I believe, the principal snare in which the enemy keeps you. If, as you describe, you ever felt, though transiently, love in the Spirit for the truth and believers for the truth's sake, it was because of Christ's mediation bringing the Spirit into your heart. Then be sure, above all things, that you cherish that tender hope, which in such a moment you felt, that Christ had a favour towards you. You never can take too much encouragement from such a hope, provided it tends to make you more earnest in seeking, instead of being satisfied without going further.

You have seen the account of Sukey Harley. I want just such a one of Tamar Brake. Go to her quietly, and let her describe how she sought, and how she found, Christ's mercy.

Your very affectionate B. G.

LETTER V.

Bengeo, *Jan.* 31, 1839.

. . . I HAVE often thought of you, and I did more especially think of you in your little room yesterday after your letter reached me. I feel it by no means an easy matter to write a letter of advice, especially as directing a person's outward course. All I know is that it is an inestimable gift of God to be enabled really to follow the directions given us in the 3rd of Proverbs; and we shall do well to entreat him to bestow that gift upon us. I know not what the will of God respecting another may be; the great matter for each, if really alive to the necessity of serving God, is to seek it out for themselves through all discouragements or difficulties. I ventured to say one thing to you, the propriety of which I believe you felt; that it is certainly right that we should act with sincerity. Therefore if you feel a conscientious scruple against going into the church, do not let any consideration induce you to conceal it from your father. For I am certain that there is nothing more hardening to the heart than a presumptuous meddling with so sacred an office as that of the ministry: and the professing world exhibits a melancholy picture of that state described by Paul, 'hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' There is some tenderness of conscience in the beginning of the life of many persons, who gradually give ear to the counsel of those whom they suppose must know better than themselves; but who in fact, through that very presumption which they have long since ceased to tremble at themselves, endeavour to fortify the heart of all who will listen to them, against the true, tender, deep, and spiritual fear of God. Do not let us trifle with convictions: do not let us suppose that hereafter we shall be able to guide our course practically according to them, though in the meantime for certain carnal ends we walk as though we had them not: for God 'taketh the wise in their own craftiness.' Such persons become gradually and insensibly more and more hardened against conviction—at last they believe a lie; and then will endeavour to enforce on others the way which has seemed good to themselves. I am far from saying these things with personal reference to others. I know deeply and sorely how guilty I have been myself, and shall yet be so if the grace of God keep me not from it with a strong hand. I know that this evil is in you also, for it is the fault and corruption of our nature. Deliverance from this is no easy matter; no light in the understanding—though it may distinguish to a hair's breadth between false religion and true, the form of godliness and its power—will effect this deliverance. Down we must be brought by the effectual power of the Holy Ghost; and be raised up by the power of his love, which alone is 'strong as death;' there is nothing else so strong.

At the same time when we find ourselves encompassed and entangled with snares and difficulties, (as, if it please Almighty God,

you will feel as I have done,) let us beware of thinking that our safe and right way is to flounce out of them; we shall only bring ourselves into worse. David says in the 66th Psalm, 'Thou broughtest us into the net:' and the only way of escape is pointed out to us in the 107th Psalm, 'They cried unto the Lord in their trouble.'

Also do pray, if you feel the importance of these things, for grace to be very stedfast though tender in conscience. If you are to abide in the University, and as long as you are there, I am sure it is that you may improve your talents to the utmost. You and I must beware of sloth and religious dreaming. The true gate is always and in everything strait, and the right way narrow; but the Lord, who has prayed, 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil,' is able to guide you and me. . . . Your affectionate uncle, B. G.

LETTER VI.

Bengeo, *July 5*, 1841.

I CANNOT tell you how much impressed I was with hope that the Lord had been pleased to begin a good work in your heart from your conversation with me at Bath, and with dear Henrietta and myself here. I hope you will excuse me, dear sister, for saying that I felt this a reason for rejoicing with trembling indeed; for I have had a little experience within the last eight years, and as yet but a little, of the snares and difficulties which beset our way in every step we take Zionward, and which are very well set forth, and not a whit too strongly, in one of the hymns of Hart's which we so greatly admire:

'Before we've journey'd far
Two dangerous gulfs are fixed;
Dead sloth and pharisaic pride,
Scarce a hair's breadth betwixt.'

And a little further on he says,

'Sometimes we seem to gain
Great lengths of ground by day;
But find, alas! when night comes on,
We quite mistook the way.'

This last testimony is very true indeed, and I know few things more disheartening than to be convinced of our errors of this kind: it generally excites much bitterness in our spirits, yet wherever grace enters it is eventually overruled for much good, by bringing us to a clearer discovery of the depths of our corruption, and so making us feel more wretched, except we can find Christ; and as Romaine well says, 'A Christ unapplied is no Christ.' The sanctifying power of God operating upon these sore trials, obliges us by degrees to open our mouth and to eat that which he gives us; and when enabled to do so in humility and faith, though it be a roll

like that he gave to Ezekiel filled with mourning and woe, we find it in our mouth sweet as honey, as he did (ch. iii. 3).

I hope you will bear with me; for having spoken so freely, being greatly encouraged in your behalf, I have now felt that Christian faithfulness obliged me to go further; and to say that from the time I read your letter of June 21st, to the present day, I have not been able to resist the conviction, which in perusing it over and again has been rather confirmed, that if that light and comfort from the view of a free salvation, was by the life-giving influence of the Holy Ghost, as I do both wish and hope, something sooner or later will be allowed to happen which will show you that you have since that blessed time been going too fast. You seem in some measure, though perhaps obscurely, to have some discernment of this yourself, though I feared from the whole tenor of your letter that you had not nearly laid it enough to heart, for you say, 'If I speak of myself, unbelief and pride rise up, and turn all my glowing expressions of faith and deep confessions into lies.' I am sure this is true of me, as much as it can be of you, but then I do not find it at all easy to get this dreadful rent healed. Here one branch of the soul trouble begins, of which you said to us while you were here, 'What is it?' May I beg you very seriously and with much prayer to that Saviour who appeared in that day so very glorious and merciful in your eyes, to read such a chapter as the 30th of Jeremiah, and to lay to heart all the combinations of mercy and judgment which it contains, and observe well that the crowning promise in the whole, which is perhaps the 17th verse, is worded thus, 'I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.' The Lord keep you and your dear husband from the poison of that deadly profession which sees nothing in such a word, except the description of the outward state of the literal Israel; and from the more subtle, but no less deadly poison of that oily letter-gospel which presses the first clause upon us, but clean overlooks the last, and can make nothing of it at all. I feel as if I could write to you much, but as you say, There is but one Teacher; and if that blessed truth be not perverted by that proud heart within us, which refuses all reproof, we cannot insist upon it too much. For my part I know I have perverted it in my inward spirit and temper times without number; but God's merciful word gives me a nail in his holy place in these gracious words, 'He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.'

I was very sorry we did not see you both again and for a longer time; but may the Lord in his great mercy through Christ bring us together heart to heart, which is the earnest prayer of

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER VII.

Bengeo, *July* 22, 1841.

. . . When first I discovered that the work of grace in dear Henrietta corresponded with what is set forth by our friends in London as the saving work of grace and would lead her in spirit to be united to them, I was greatly afraid. My heart sank within me. I could not bear the prospect which I thought this union unfolded of reproach and trouble, as well as perhaps in the end (in my individual case as a minister) separation from the church, my place in which afforded at that time my only means of support. But God enabled me seriously to ponder the matter, and to lay aside all thought of these dreaded consequences. I remembered the word of God, 'Ponder the path of thy feet,' i. e. Take every step in the fear of God; also that he says, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' Now why am I not to hope he will be as good as his word?

On a certain morning having risen from a very disquieted night's rest, as I was walking in my little study in the Rectory, I was conscious of a very gentle change only to the gospel which I had professed for years, and thought I had been preaching. It seemed to be said in my heart, Now take no thought about all those trials, look to Christ, and keep asking for his blessing. That is eight and a half years ago; and you know some of the things which have happened since. They were enough to frighten me in the foresight. The indignation of my congregation; the contempt I was treated with; the alienation of some of my dearest friends and relations; my long conflict about the church, because by the grace of God I was fully purposed that I would not stir, except he made my path clear. Yet now I can acknowledge that all these trials were good: they did me no harm at all, except this be harm, that they wounded my pride incessantly and continually; and they brought me more nearly to be nothing that Christ might become all: i. e. they brought me nearer to a discernment of that gospel in its saving efficacy which I used to preach about, with a whole, unbroken heart, in days you well remember. . . .

Your very affectionate brother, B. G.

LETTER VIII.

May 2, 1842.

I have very often thought of you since we last met, and long for some opportunity of profitable communication. Whether it will please God to allow this, or to hedge up the way that we must not either by writing or conversation mutually encourage one another,

I do not know. But if nothing hinder you from writing to me, except temptations and darkness and fears in your own soul, I do earnestly hope and will endeavour to pray that you may not be hindered at all by these. For when a simple description of these, and of the helps and hopes we find under them, is given to one who is in the same tribulation, it often pleases God to bless and comfort both the writer and the reader. 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often to one another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it.'

Last Friday I found in prayer some encouragement, which from the way it entered led me to preach in the evening from these words, 'The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.' I am sure that as in the natural world he moved upon that mass of confusion, so he spiritually works in us in a like condition. We are made sensible of this ruin and confusion. We cannot put the crooked straight, nor yet bring light or life. Yet this presence of the Spirit always brings spiritual life. This work of humiliation is accomplished in each in very different methods, but it is not, as many imagine, only an accidental variety in the work of grace, but truly an essential part of it. It may be gradually, but it will be surely, that the Lord in all his people will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent (1 Cor. i. 19). And this description of the natural earth, without form, void, dark, covered with the deep, is very forcible to express the condition we are brought to feel our natural hearts to be in. And yet the Spirit is there, and sensibly felt to be there, while in his fear we keep looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the appointed time God spake but one word, and light came in. And this is the great secret: to be instant in prayer for light, and that for light from the Lord. Thousands of professors are in light, but the question for each of us to settle is, Whence came the light that is in us? If it be the Lord's light, I am sure we shall feel the power of his word in it: 'GOD SAID, Let there be light: and there was light.' And now if in the time of temptation this light should discover nothing more than our earth without form and void, yet, the Spirit being there, though the discovery both alarm and humble us, it may and should lead to a hope that the creation will be carried on. And this light will not fail to discover something also of Christ the light of life, as I trust you truly found, in a measure, that day while you were reading Romaine; and you must remember, that if so, your own confused and void condition can no more extinguish this light of Christ, than the earth of old could destroy that new created light. This is matter for praise, hope, instruction, and comfort. May the Lord grant you to feel it. . . .

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER IX.

June 27, 1842.

I HAVE just received your mother-in-law's kind letter; and as I found encouragement from it to hope there is some fruit of your labours, I felt with this a desire to write to you. I must say that it pleased God to deal very graciously with me in reference to my ministry. I mean that he upheld me through great darkness of soul, sensible ignorance, and many fears, from ever looking back, having laid my hand to that plough. I am sensible, (and am now so more fully than at first,) that it is needful indeed to find our commission from him, that he ordains and sends us forth. I perceived, and surely you must allow it, that this is a point very little and indeed not at all pressed upon us in the general profession. Neither churchmen nor dissenters, for the most part, lay this point to heart; and if it enter with practical effect into our hearts, we must venture to be very singular; for who will unite with us? It is one of the grand points with the real minister of Jesus Christ, to make his calling to this office spiritually clear. This strengthens him in the day of battle. 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.' 'Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.' 'The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Carnal reason says, What, must all this be felt and known now-a-days? But faith will reply, and that very simply, Yes, surely it must. Now faith (as we all teach) if it be true, never lies inactive in the heart; it will set us to work; and the work will be soberly and constantly, through all the floods of unbelieving doubts that oppose themselves, to cry for the clear light of God. If darkness prevail for a time, even a long time, let us not be moved from thus praying: watchful throughout, that we may not be hurried by the influence of a legal conscience from the situation and employment in which we were fixed by Providence, when this spiritual light, beginning to break in, discovered to us our danger and our necessity. How often, in my former position, have I gone into St. Andrew's pulpit covered with this darkness, but with a little measure of quieting hope through all, that in abiding and labouring in that darkness, and not being afraid to acknowledge it in my ministry, I was in the way wherein the Lord would turn my darkness into light. I believe I have often been helped by a little measure of that mercy applied, which I dared not apply to myself, 'He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.' I remember one Saturday receiving a letter from Mr. Burrell on the very subject I now write to you upon. It so awakened my fears that I could not prepare for the next day's duty till quite the evening, when I wrote a sermon (for I did not then often extemporize) upon this text, 'Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man:' and I must say I was both surprised and encouraged by

the confirming power I felt in the delivery of that sermon that the Spirit helped my infirmity; and I believe also, respecting one at least of my hearers, that the fruit of that sermon abides to this day.

It seems to me as if you had especial reason to be thankful that, as far as we can possibly see, God owns your ministry by not causing the word to return void. The hope of this you will find to be often tried, but not therefore disallowed of God. If this encouragement be used aright, it will rouse you to the most patient and earnest prayer, because, notwithstanding this hope, I feel in my case, and doubtless you will feel too, there are so many things lacking, that a constant intercourse between Christ and us must be kept up, or we shall be speedily drawn out of the narrow way into some dangerous by-path. Now the least intimation of his favour, any way vouchsafed, becomes to us, if the gospel be brought to bear upon it, a reason for hoping that he will give us all things; as Moses addresses himself to prayer even in his last moment, 'Thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand.' This continual prayer of faith must ever be bringing in fresh tokens, further discoveries of truth, both to bring us low, and to exalt the Lord high. Above all a clearer discovery of Christ, and of his saving benefits applied to us. These are the true riches. Having these we may say to the blind and the lame, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee.' But I must say, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' for I find that to this day I know very little of them: and the apostle's words encourage me in this respect, 'Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

There is a further point which I must press here. When we are favoured at all to enter, as Asaph expresses it, 'into the sanctuary,' what a heavenly and pure light shines on all these things, and how honourable and glorious this whole work of God's grace working these things in us appears. But when we ourselves become entangled with the spirit of the world, and listen to what men say, and most of all to what vain professors say, oh what a deadly change ensues! We find they turn our glory into shame; and David says to them in the Spirit, 'How long?' (Ps. iv. 2.) The whole work then appears so mean that it is a hard thing not to be shamed out of it; and if God leave us to ourselves, we shall be. They insinuate that the vainest enthusiasts talk as we do, and that we are like them. Now if it be true that they talk so, yet 'an enemy hath done this.' Such is the baseness of the world that Christ's own golden coin stamped with his own image and superscription will not pass current, because Satan destroys its credit by the profusion of his own adulterate money. Therefore if you and I be enabled to trade with this gold of heaven, we must make up our mind to be despised and rejected of men. Our honour and reputation must

come down, we must either quit them, or quit what is infinitely more valuable.

I may say that it has pleased God to enable me willingly to make this sacrifice; but the root of my pride remaining in the corrupt nature, I find the danger and the sacrifice too, as great now as it was at first; and the continual opposition leads me to a continual fighting. I could often in a fleshly manner pity myself, and every one else who seems called to this mortifying conflict. But so to do is most dangerous. We must rather cry day and night for faith to look at unseen things, and above all at Christ himself, both in his glory and his humiliation. 'He is despised and rejected of men.' 'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it' (Matt. xvi. 24, 25). God grant us to remember this is our profession—to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him.

I was greatly encouraged to hear of the comfort —— had found. I can truly say my heart is knit to him. I remember how he received the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and cannot but hope that it will please God to show him still greater things than he has seen, and more clearly. I know how the heart labours in the dark, and labours to no profit. We say, We are wrong and deceived, and never can get right. It seems to us a sore and fruitless conflict. Yet we are like the disciples, 'He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night Jesus cometh unto them, walking upon the sea.' Whenever, whether in the ministry of the word, or in private prayer, the power of the Lord is present to heal, it always appears to us that we are 'at the land whither we went.' 'Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend . . . or descend . . . But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith.' The discernment which my dear friend seems to have of the coming and going of the Lord, is one piece of Christ's golden money. I hope he will diligently trade with it.

I am glad to hear there is a sobriety and stedfastness in ——. Her case is a very peculiar one, and the trials she will find will be many. I hope the Lord will teach her what this means, Israel 'shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.' It is a great thing to be spiritually humbled. Thousands change from worldly gaity to religious dissipation, but are no nearer the kingdom of heaven for that change. If the grace of God effectually enter, all the gaity in religion falls like mown grass. All who have not the root of the matter, speedily find strength enough to help themselves on with. Some, like Temporary in Pilgrim's Progress, show both concern and earnestness for a time, but at last getting acquainted with one Save-self no more desire faithful conversation. When Christian and Pliable fell together into the Slough of Despond,

Pliable said, Where are we? And Christian replied, Truly I cannot tell. Both were confounded, but the difference lay here, that Pliable helped himself out the wrong way, and Christian could not get out at all till Help came down to assist him. What a work it is to be half smothered in that slough, and not to be able to get out. Yet if God's power be in our hearts, it will keep us continually earnest, at least groaning, in prayer. Why is it that the Lord brings all his people through these dark and painful difficulties? Because they must be humbled and brought very low. It is very sweet and confirming to find that in these trials, though he seem to have forgotten us, yet he returns again, and, when he returns, we begin to find how much we have gained by the trouble; but we cannot see through the darkness and bewilderment of it, that we are gaining anything. I have found this to be true over and over again; and to find it, endears the way of the Lord to us, and gives us a spiritual courage. Mrs. —— appears to be brought into a low place, and to manifest a spiritual earnestness there. I am sure that if the keen feeling she has of sin lead her to abhor herself, she will one day find Jesus the Saviour of lost sinners, whose love and beauty will bring her to humble herself yet more; but with this difference, not in bondage but in perfect freedom. I desire to be very kindly remembered &c.

Affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER X.

August 18, 1842.

The news from —— is very disheartening to me. I feared something of the kind, and know not, as you say, where these things will end. I hope one effect will be to enable each of us to look well to ourselves, and to be much in prayer both for ourselves and others. It appears to us there is a little tender flock there, in the midst of wolves, and likely to be devoured of them. The power of the truth soberly felt in a quickened conscience will show the necessity in the fear of God of not misleading them ourselves. The essential difference most assuredly is not between church ministers and dissenters, but between living ministers and dead ones. It is inconsistent to say, Don't go to such a sect, they mislead you; and then to suffer them to hear what is as bad. Something short of the truth is preferred by us, if we can act so with our eyes open. I have reason, though I am now greatly cast down, to thank the Lord that through his kindness I was not overthrown in that slippery place; and am sure I was not without the sin in my heart, and therefore should be very sorry to throw stones at another. My hope is that the Lord's time for opening the eyes is not yet come, seeing he works very gradually: but I do fear more than I can tell you, both for myself and others, if we quench spiritual convictions. For the effect is most fearfully blinding and hardening. We take a few steps wrong, with some fear and tenderness still left, and this beguiles us to think that we are

safe: but before we are aware the aspect of everything changes. Spiritual light withdraws, carnal counsel enters, and when we ought to be sorely lamenting our backsliding, we begin to account God's fear to be bondage, and to be glad we have escaped from it. If, just at such a moment as this, we throw ourselves into the embraces of kind friends who are destitute of vital religion, how shall we escape a most fatal entanglement? It is better for those who are shepherds, to abide in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night (Luke ii. 8). It is better to hear Christ's words about hirelings fleeing (John x. 12). I have felt, since I began this letter, a spiritual power both alarming and quickening my heart, from those very words. I am sure, in my own case, I see 'the wolf coming,' and am afraid lest he devour me. We get disheartened, tempted, despised, falsely accused, and these things work impatience and many evils. Is not all this a dreadful wolf? and nothing but the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd, can keep us from fleeing. My heart turns to this hope, 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' May God fulfil it in me and in others. Very affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER XI.

August 15, 1846.

I FELT thankful to the Lord for enabling me to write in any way profitably as you express; and if he will graciously continue this great mercy, and grant to you and me the effectual grace which enables us to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, we shall also praise him together.

While I was this morning meditating upon your case, and what to do, one thing which occurred to me in the beginning of 1833 came so strongly to mind, and appeared so suitable, that it immediately led me to begin this letter. The dispensations of the Lord at that time had in a measure humbled me, and I began to see a glimmering light which showed me, though but faintly, that I had been only a minister of the letter, not of the spirit; and I felt a willingness to embrace these convictions, for which I am now most thankful, for none but the Lord can bring our proud hearts to do this feelingly.

I was at that time very evangelical in my words, and had just written a sermon on Isaiah xlix. 1–3. I set forth Christ very strongly in word, but feeling a misgiving just as I ended my sermon, I said something to the following effect, 'Knowing that neither you nor I can enter into these things without sovereign grace, I charge you before the Lord, and join myself in the same, that we be instant in prayer day and night for this blessing.' As I spoke, I felt so humbling an influence, as if I sunk down out of the pulpit, and looked up to the Lord with those who feared God among my hearers, and joined myself with them. I believe that it pleased God to own me as his servant at that very time. I never lost the impression in

preaching: it abode and increased; and I found that though it appeared weak and contemptible to the proud, it established my ministry, and confirmed a hope which I trust I shall never be ashamed of. All my laborious preparations for the pulpit, which were carnal, faded out of me from that hour; and I waited on the Lord with fervent supplication, to be himself our teacher and to teach me what to say. The very next week I expressed my confusion, fear, and hope, the awakening and humbling I had begun to find, in a sermon on these blessed words, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life;' and from that time the opposition against me began; for they felt the sword of the Spirit cut asunder their flimsy profession. 'I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls. . . . They shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee' (Jer. i. 18, 19).

The Lord grant it to you and me both, is the prayer of

Your very affectionate brother, B. G.

LETTER XII.

Nov. 6, 1846.

. . . I CAN say, as well as you, that I expect much trouble; and none can endure in that searching trouble of conviction and law upon the conscience, nor find order or light in those regions of confusion and the shadow of death. It is sent to show us ourselves, but it is only a preparation for Christ, not Christ himself; and none but Christ himself can show us light, or do us good. I believe, therefore, all that we can do, if quickened by grace, is to commit the keeping of our souls to him, that is, be ever so committing, and that in well doing. Now constant confession and crying for mercy is well doing; for he is a faithful Creator, that is, he will create peace, and create holiness, and create salvation. Six days under his forming hand will create a beautiful world out of chaos, with his own image created in it. The more we make of him and his works, the less of ourselves and our works, the more true it is that faith is already at work in our hearts. I never understood those Psalms which speak of regarding the works of the Lord and the operation of his hands, till I began to discern this true spiritual kingdom: but I have known a little since of what David means in Psalm xxviii, when he says, 'Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours (for in their view religion is a very smooth, easy matter), but mischief is in their hearts.' Then follows that awful execration which we dare not apply to wicked persons, but to wicked principles, except, as in David's case, by direct inspiration the persons were pointed out, 'Give them according to their deeds' &c.; and why? What makes him so full of indignation? 'Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands.' Thus, as Luther would say, the scriptures everywhere pull

down all confidence in our works, and exalt faith in his works; but all this is not seen till we begin to be stripped, humbled, and emptied, and be in that condition which will make many a priest, and Levite too, pass by us on the other side. . . .

Your affectionate brother, B. G.

LETTER XIII.

Bengeo, *July* 21, 1847.

I HAVE received your letter, and am glad you wrote to me. Let me give you one hint in the first place. You say in the beginning of your letter, that when you have spoken to any one (meaning to a spiritual person on spiritual subjects), it has relieved you. If so, then pray that you may have strength to resist the temptation, which is too apt to come upon persons like you, to be silent. Seek really and pray that you may find unity, as it says in God's word, 'They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.'

I think you have no cause to be discouraged at all about your business. I do not wonder at that change in your feelings which took place as soon as ever you were settled in it; and it evidences itself to be only a temptation to unsettle you. It is a great blessing to have a business which may employ us, and enable us to earn our livelihood; it saves us from many temptations; for listlessness and idleness, which are too likely to invade our souls if we have no fixed business, are the greatest possible enemies to our souls. Certainly the providence of God has called you to your present occupation, and fixed you in it. In continuing to be diligently occupied in it, you are in that way in which, without any sting of conscience which would harass you, you may continue begging the Lord to instruct, guide, and protect you. Snares and dangers you will find, and such as will grow immediately out of your business; but were you in another, you would find snares and dangers there also. The truth is, that our safety does not consist in our finding an exemption from snares and dangers, but in our being urged every hour to God in Christ to be our Shield and Deliverer.

I have found this at times very refreshing to my own soul, and it has enabled me to abide stedfastly hitherto; and I found the constant exercise of it very needful indeed while yet I continued in the Church of England. Because while there, I was afraid of quenching the light which seemed to show me that God disturbed my continuing there, and yet I was obliged to continue till he opened the door out of it himself. Those trials have passed away, but others have unfolded themselves, and even now increase upon me. I thought your letter came suitably to me this morning, for I was seeking that the Lord would have mercy to enable me to set out afresh. I was ashamed and confounded to think of past things, and to feel the distance, the ignorance, and unprofitableness of my condition; and the 3rd of Philippians was a help to me in prayer, 'Not as though

I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after:' and again, 'Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.'

I desire to own that my own especial shortcomings call for this state of mind in myself more than in many others whom I know. Yet I am sure that it is a way in which God will lead all his people: he will often hide all encouragement from past things from them, that they may address themselves to fresh seeking, like the very youngest beginners: though in so addressing themselves, they are in the right way to be enabled to 'eat the old store, and bring forth the old, because of the new.' Wherefore I agree with you in what you say, that the enemy is busy to keep us from praying; but though he disturbs all, something says, 'How do you know you are kept from praying? If you cannot speak, you can sigh; if you can do neither, there is the desire left to cry out all your troubles before the Lord.' I think I have felt it this way, and did so last night, and I hope the Lord has in a manner acknowledged it, from the refreshment I felt in that 3rd of Philippians.

One thing I know you must be cautious of. Do not discourage yourself, and then suppose it is the Lord's doing. God has nowhere said that we shall never open our Bible and find such words as these meet us, 'I will not hear thee.' This was the case with you, and so (as you rightly express it) you were robbed of the little encouragement you had found. You must not be at the mercy of such things as these. The Lord tells you it is not his doing. For he says, 'The thief cometh not, but for to steal; . . . I come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'

The greatest enemy to all those who are enabled to seek mercy is a legal spirit. We think we do not deserve faith, and so we shall not get it. But we must set ourselves most of all against that Dagon. If you find that the enemy (as you say) drives you from your knees, then you can pray as well, or better, walking about; and if you don't know how to pray, I don't think you can begin better than with the Lord's prayer:—'Lord, I call thee Our Father, for so thou has given us leave to do. But I am in the dark, and long to know that I am thy child by spiritual adoption. Lord, thou hast showed me that I shall never know this to be indeed my portion, except in pressing on: wherefore grant me the Holy Spirit, and enable me to continue asking for grace, and do not account it presumption that I call thee Our Father, for thou hast said we are to do so. Therefore I do it. Yet the sin of presumption is in me, but Lord, thou must take the sin away, for I cannot take away sin. I can only bring sin and abundance of ignorance and conceit. Lord, help my infirmity.'

I hope the Lord will be with us both and with many more, and grant us the true spirit of supplication; then we shall prevail.

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XIV.

Bengeo, *Dec.* 27, 1848.

. . . MAY the Lord who has put it into your heart to pray that your soul may live, preserve you in that spiritual tenderness that now appears; and especially that you may mourn his absence when you cannot enjoy his presence. How desirable is that blessed freedom from the bondage of the law which shows you that the Lord disapproves of the thought that we must be generally in darkness and doubts, and only now and then in light. So a believer knows and so he lives, while he breathes the Spirit of Christ. The Lord is very near at that time: 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed' (Gen. xxvii. 27).

I thought and believe I found a little of it, as well as you, on Christmas Day: but yesterday, at Hitchin, I was under a dark cloud all day; and though my subject, Mal. iv. 2, was relieving, I did not feel the comfort—Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth out of yourselves, and out of prison, and out of death, and out of the spirit of the world; and ye shall grow up unto Christ: and ye shall have no more power nor understanding to do this for yourselves than calves to make the sun arise. . . . Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XV.

Hertford, *August* 26, 1853.

. . . I HOPE that whatever trouble you have found outwardly, you have been able to find the best of all antidotes. I have just returned home from preaching on Heb. xii. 11, having very unexpectedly found much enlargement and comfort in so doing. I had continued throughout the day much tried, and could not realize any of that sweet comfort which in a spirit of real submission is felt in the truth there testified. At last I found a softening in praying for myself, and some others in particular as very needy ones, being comforted with the hope that the Lord was afflicting us for our profit, and when I began to preach, the subject opened in a very encouraging manner to me—'it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' I think the principal part of that exercise is to find Christ in our troubles, to be enabled to overcome all hindrances which oppose our humbling ourselves before him as sinners relying on the efficacy of his atoning blood and righteousness. This is by no means easy, especially as the trouble itself stirs up the evil of our nature, and makes us feel much sad impatience and rebellion. Here is the force of the apostle's word, 'Nevertheless,' the trouble yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby. . . .

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XVI.

Bengeo, *Sept.* 29, 1854.

I THANK you for your kind letter; and as to your painful outward trials, doubtless they are not joyous but grievous, yet I believe they are sent because God loves you, and I hope he will enable you, through Christ made wisdom to you, to manage them rightly. This is a blessed gift of grace. Romaine speaks sweetly and well upon it, in his Letters and his Walk of Faith. I am a beggar myself, and have no alms for you; but Christ is rich enough to bless us both with this wisdom. Ask for it.

As to your letter, I have wished, in reading it over, to say a few words to you upon two points. In the first of these I quite believe we are both agreed. I find no fault with your faith in the matter, but only with your unguarded expression of it, which is calculated to bring tender, troubled souls into temptation; and therefore ought not to be admitted. You say, 'I have felt more afraid lest I should be judged for the presumption of praying not by his Holy Spirit, than for any wicked thing I have committed.' But now you do not mean that while doubting and fearing lest the Holy Spirit should not be in you, you would restrain prayer till that be cleared. You would cry for the clearing; and such a cry would not be 'spiritual wickedness in high places,' except there was added the reigning presumption of self-righteousness, that your prayers were the ground of your hope, for which the Lord became your debtor. I find fault with your expression, not your intention; especially because it is calculated to lay an intolerable yoke upon tender, tried consciences, and to strengthen a not uncommon temptation that lest we should not pray aright we must not pray at all.

The second point I wish to speak upon is the view you still take of the present awful dispensation: wherein it still appears to me that you shut your eyes to what God made exceedingly clear; and which therefore he made clear that we might see his judgments herein are even as the light which goeth forth. I wish you to attend to the letter I enclose with this: see how simple, how tender, how unbinding, the effect of that prayer was, not to be suffered to enter into the temptation which so readily presents itself when a hypocrite, who has appeared a saint, is unveiled, that there is no saving clearness of truth on the earth. I do not now wish you to 'add your judgment to God's, by putting your construction upon his doings, and attempting to explain,' &c.; but I desire you may be enabled to open your eyes, by the holy anointing, to see that in this case God has himself put the right construction upon his doings, and explained the case fully. He has caused that miserable man's sins to go before him to judgment. He has afforded us evidence that his heart was never estranged from reigning lust. Trace the case throughout by the light of God's word, and see how it confirms the word. Has not God said of such characters, 'that they which do such things shall

not inherit the kingdom of God?' yet he did them; and maintained his religion while his heart was thus unsound. That God should send 'strong delusion' upon such a one, through Satan's false light, is still scriptural. Though such a one should be David's guide and sweet counsellor, with Ahithophel; or Paul's fellow-labourer, with Demas; still the Lord fulfils his word in cutting him off. The man who says, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear,' and goes out from the presence of the Lord, and plunges into sin for solace, is the firstborn of Adam.

Is it not a relief that the Lord confirms and magnifies his word? With this light to our feet, let us flee to the refuge; but the Lord grant this understanding with our faith, or the spirit in us will gender only to bondage: which I should fear in your case, only I believe the Lord makes you honest, gives you 'an earnest desire not to be suffered to live short of the promises,' and sometimes 'a blessed touch.' I am, &c., B. G.

LETTER XVII.

Bengeo, *June* 9, 1855.

I MUST not let the day pass without a line to you, which I hope will reach you on Monday morning. I did not receive yours till my return from Town; but found it welcome.

I think I may say, with gratitude to the Lord, that I found he prospered my way and gave me a blessing on Wednesday; and it encouraged me greatly. Though you know the sincere regard I have for you, yet you know also how painfully heart-searching all those rending trials are, of which we have seen not a few since Mr. Burrell's death; and you know also that these things make us to sink low for ourselves; and there is always cause enough for depression in that quarter. However, on Wednesday morning I deemed that the Lord would prosper my way; and so indeed I found. For some hours after I reached Town, I was under painful temptations because our cause everywhere appeared to me so mean and contemptible: but it seemed to me as if the Lord took a blessed advantage of these temptations, and presented to me, in a very beautiful light, his own parable of the shepherd leaving the ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness, and going after the one lost sheep: and in preaching I felt such blessed enlargement and liberty that I could say, 'Surely the Lord is in this place;' and it comforted me for you also. On my return home, I found a letter from Mr. H., giving me an account of the great encouragement your preaching had given him. It was really a sweet letter: the tone and spirit of it seemed to set forth a divine power in his own heart. So I took it to Mr. W. Maydwell, who read it, and enjoyed it greatly; and I think that letter, and what I could tell him of myself, and your letter, altogether warmed his heart greatly, and makes him, I hope, go with gladness to fulfil his engagement for you to-morrow. . . .

I was very glad to hear your account of —— and his friends.

I like the appearance much. It seems stedfast and spiritual. I have for many years believed that Mr. Blackstock was a good man. I remember a sermon of his, seen by me and my late dear wife, which both of us approved, but she especially felt it very uniting, and told Mr. Abbott so. I have a deep and serious persuasion that our dear friends in London, the best of them, but not Mr. Abbott, lest they should err on one side, erred on the other, and thought the Lord could not be supposed to bless any who showed reserve from uniting with them. This is a great mistake. The Lord will surprise us by putting his grace just where he pleases, and often where some would not expect it, without sanctioning the errors of any system. You and I cannot keep ourselves right, except the Lord keep us. . . . Oh that the Lord may appear in behalf of his desolate flock you are now visiting! Give my spiritual love to them. The Lord make us true and tender. . . .

Yours most affectionately, B. G.

LETTER XVIII.

Hertford, *August* 11, 1855.

. . . I AM very glad to hear that dear Mr. Vinall's bow appears to abide in strength; I wonder when he will begin to find out that the resurrection of his paralyzed members, which he has so long looked forward to, took place long ago, and 'therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.' How glad I was to hear that Mrs. M. had been so exceedingly comforted under his preaching. I hope you will remember us very kindly to all the Brighton and Hertford friends we know, not forgetting ——. It is indeed a subject of rejoicing if we find any 'walking in the truth' whom we may have feared not to be so walking. The Lord have mercy, and cause our hearts and affections to unite with all such; as St. Paul writes, 'all them that love (not just say they do) our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.'

But indeed, on the other hand, may you and I never forget the danger there is daily of receiving another spirit, which is not the Holy Spirit. Those who feel this danger must be content that many will call them bigoted, and call the fear of God bondage. Among many things which have pleased me in the reports of some of our friends, my fears were awakened by a reference made to one, whom I have formerly known, whom may the Lord have mercy upon, but I am sure she formerly gave great evidence of a light unholy spirit. If all that which in days gone by has been accounted comeliness, has been in very deed turned into corruption, and Christ has covered it, I am sure there is cause for joy and thanksgiving; if otherwise, the Lord guard his sheep from giving ear to the flatterer saying 'I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows,'—with her much fair speech, to cause the simple to turn out of the way. . . .

Yours very affectionately, B. G.

LETTER XIX.

Maney, *Feb.* 18, 1856.

. . . WHAT need we have of a deep falling before Jesus Christ, that we contend not for the least merit of any kind in our works or services. I felt this very much this morning while I was considering the letter which I received from M. I have, however, felt that I should be more at liberty in answering that letter to you than to herself: for though I most fully believe the Lord has had great mercy upon her, and gives her both a discerning spirit, and power to express it in writing; yet I feel also that she will require an especial spiritual caution, and I hope it will be granted to her. First, as to the case she refers to, I wish to state a few particulars, not in the confidence that my judgment is right; far from it: but as I am aware that I may be mistaken, so I hope M. will feel that she may be mistaken also. When M. showed me her letter just before I left Bengeo, I approved it and told her so. I felt and still feel, that it is in the direction that letter takes, that the person to whom it is addressed needs, and will continue to need, very earnest admonition. When I saw the poor woman herself I cautioned her not to despise that letter, for I believed it was true, and endeavoured to show her its meaning, though you know how slow persons very commonly are to comprehend their own errors. . . . I went on to converse with her gently, and more than once was much encouraged for her, and believed that though there is weakness and a tendency to run on in her words too much, yet there was also a deep seed of what was better within her. One day I called, and she seemed very free and tender. She told me she had been writing to M. I read the letter. She spoke kindly in it, and as if she felt kindly, and as to M.'s admonition she responded to it thus far, 'O Lord, show me.' I saw that this was a victory in her spirit, and therefore was pleased with the letter. If it does not justify the above opinion, I am mistaken. If it does, it gives ground for encouragement; and it is as much encouragement as M., were she even like Deborah, a mother in Israel, would be able to derive from far the greater part of the letters she would have to write. I often in similar cases find no more nor so much effect from my letters, yet feel at times thankful, for I perceive the Lord condescends to bless them a little. I might mention, for example, the letter which Mr. Burrell addressed to Mr. Dore, which proved a turning point for good in Mr. Dore's life. Mr. Dore never entered into that letter; and my own judgment is that Mr. Burrell had himself a wrong impression of many things when he wrote it. Yet it proved a blessing to Mr. Dore, simply because his spirit fell flat down, and he did not justify himself. When Mr. Burrell saw that, he wisely forbore to press his letter: and had he pressed it, he would, like Esau, have overdriven one of the Lord's tried sheep.

There is one more point in M.'s letter which I would wish to say

one word upon by way of caution. Does she suppose that the exercise of the utmost faithfulness and discretion will deliver or is by the Lord intended to deliver us from being deceived in some particular characters? The Lord's judgment on the point we know, for he will not trust his servants to root up the tares, lest they root up the wheat with them. This very thing often obliges us to humble ourselves in the dust, especially as we are called upon to walk in kindness, brotherly love, and a uniting spirit, not in jealousy and separation. It is easy to multiply examples wherein we have been deceived in others, but we should remember that the secret judgment of God is so deep and hidden from us that we may see two persons whose graces and whose failings may appear much alike; and yet in the end the one proves a hypocrite, and the other a saint. Now our fear of encouraging the hypocrite, is not to lead us from a spirit of love. The Lord only can guide us, and I hope he will be pleased so to do, and keep us all in a right spirit and in our right place. This is the prayer of

Yours very affectionately, B. G.

LETTER XX.

Bengeo, *Sept.* 29, 1857.

. . . WHAT we all want, is the continual grant of one thing; if we may but always get it we shall always do well—it is a spirit at once to 'go and sit down in the lowest room.' . . . You tell me that you were often tried lest what you said had not been received by some, &c. I do not wonder this tried you: the same thing often bitterly tries me, and then I find the bitterness of the trial is because I am not in 'the lowest room,' and by this, at times, I get help to come lower, and I believe it has been so with you also. It is a comfort and blessing that the Lord should very often have given you so clear a light and assurance of his enduring mercy. This is your crown, let no man take it. I know you will need it, as the Lord gives it, to preserve you through many dark passages where, without it, your heart would fail you. It is a favour not given you to flourish with, but to be as a staff to you in the waters of Jordan. It is a blessing that you can confess everything to the Lord. You complain of want of wisdom, &c.—None of these things will overthrow that foundation of Christ which standeth sure. . . .

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XXI.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 27, 1858.

. . . I DO not wonder that you have been encouraged in conversing with ——, for I have thought she has shown a clear transparency in spiritual things above many. I feel far from the point myself which I have sometimes seen in her, which I hope, together with all other evils in myself, I may more and more fully bring before Jesus Christ, or rather I would say, I hope the Spirit which helpeth our infirmities

will thus lead me. I wish it were in my power to write anything which may encourage you: for surely tribulation abounds. I felt no understanding what to say though I prayed for it, but this afternoon Mr. Bourne's 375th letter came across me, and I considered it attentively. These words seemed suitable, 'If the enemy can persuade us, or entangle us in our thoughts, to believe that the difficulties which arise are in consequence of the Lord's displeasure, then we are brought into bondage, and forced to carry a heavy burden. But if we, with the apostle Peter, can feel that there is a need for these manifold trials, then they will prove our best times, and be the means by which the Lord will keep us spiritually minded, and nearer to him. I find it hard work to stand my ground under trials, and feel a sore and painful readiness to believe that the Lord now means to bring me to destruction for my presumption. But if trials ensuing are always to be the proof of wrong proceedings, what is to become of all the glory at the beginning of the Saviour's appearance?'

This sentence seemed better than anything I had been devising in my own heart to say to you, and seemed to point out the spiritual and profitable line. The spring of it is, in the words of Peter, 'Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' This 'need' is the comparative absence in us, of the broken and contrite heart, of a spiritual feeling confession that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, of a spiritual fasting as well as prayer, till the 'kind' the disciples cannot cure, goes out at the Saviour's touch. For these things we must pray and take no denial. And if, these things being granted, you can stedfastly believe that the Lord makes your congregation desolate, in his eternal love, 'He that scattered Israel will gather him.' . . . Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XXII.

Bengeo, *August* 10, 1868.

Many thanks for your very affecting letter, giving an account of your great afflictions, and of the fruit of spiritual life, which, though with difficulty, you discern and prove through them.

I was very sorry that we missed seeing each other last Thursday, but of course our meeting could only have been a hurried one. I am glad you have seen those whose sympathy and faith refreshed your own soul. . . .

Surely there is nothing in your afflictions, or your conduct under them, that disproves your being in the footsteps of the flock. Do you remember when you were ill at Maney, and you told me of the awful view given you of the holiness and majesty of God: and Mr. Bourne said when he heard it, 'I do not expect this is the end. I think the Lord has much to show him, and he will recover?' I feel unable to instruct one in your present condition. I can but own before God my own ignorance, and he must guide us both the right

way. I do not wonder at the clouds, darkness, and tempest which you feel on every side; nor at your adopting the words of David and of one greater than David, 'I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.' The truth is, as you know, that you must be saved by Christ's having explored those depths on your behalf. I hope in this extremity he will strengthen your faith to lay hold more firmly upon the good words he has already spoken to you from behind the cloud, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.' Also that you may perceive mercy mingling with the judgment. It appears in these singular words, so I will here quote them, 'The flax and the barley were smitten . . . but the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up' (Ex. ix. 31, 32). This backwardness was their preservation.

As you say yourself, and as I cordially feel, my advice is nothing, as indeed any man's advice. The Lord bring you to say,

'No; let me rather freely yield
What most I prize to thee.'

. . . Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XXIII.

Bengeo, *July* 19, 1869.

Oh, how I desire and long to find the submission and faith to which through affliction the Lord has brought you! I have been meditating on a word which often appears to me a blessed word, though in the letter contrary to what we could have expected. It is Peter's prayer in Luke v, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' Bunyan takes it rightly when he says in effect, 'When the Lord Jesus put forth a little of his holy glory before Peter, he was constrained to say, "Depart from me," though he loved him.' The marginal references are very appropriate: Psalm cxix. 120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.' 2 Sam. vi. 9, 'David was afraid of the Lord that day.' 1 Kings xvii. 18, 'What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?' If I felt it much, I should tremble much; if I feel it little, I have the more cause to tremble: but without making any bargain with the Lord about much or little, may the answer of peace surprise us both, 'Fear not: from henceforth thou shall catch men.'

If the Lord has set you to work, is not your ministry the most important circumstance of your life? Your affliction, though to our reason an obstruction, yet I doubt not is a furtherance to your usefulness. I was glad to read what you were brought to, when the Lord obliged you to hear a 'hand' instead of a 'sermon,' and you have reason to bless the Lord that the hand did not write 'Tekel.' . . .

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XXIV.

[*No date.*]

. . . I HAD a sweet feeling of the blessedness of sitting down in a quiet and humble residence, and there praying the Lord's prayer, all our lifetime. What a substance! Adoption, adoration, submission, daily bread, mutual love, love even to our enemies, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from temptations, and from all evil! If a man is following after these things by faith, he has great gain both here and hereafter. B. G.

FORTY-EIGHT LETTERS WRITTEN BY BERNARD GILPIN TO MEMBERS OF HIS CONGREGATION AND OTHERS.

LETTER I.

Hertingfordbury, *Jan.* 31, 1836.

DR. F. having told me that he intended going up to Town for a day to see you, I feel disposed to send you a line by him, because I am anxious you should know how grieved Mrs. Gilpin was that her indisposition prevented her from going to see you while she remained in Town. You know how sincere a regard we both feel for you, remembering the very great kindness which has been shown us both by yourself and your husband. And now you know there is another bond of communion which we hope by the mercy of God unites you with us, and which is the real cause of my writing you this short letter. For indeed I speak very sincerely, when I say that ever since you left, I have been made to remember you very often, and very earnestly in prayer.

I believe the word of God: 'Strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' And again the same word, 'Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' But we must remember that this kind of seeking, which is ineffectual, is carried on in the presumption of our own ability; but the entrance of the true grace of God, which bringeth salvation, makes us to fall low in a deep sense of our utter sinfulness and weakness, and so brings us to cast ourselves on the free mercy of God; and in this kind of self-abasement and weakness there is very great strength. For the Lord says, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' I am sure, if he look upon us, it will be with us, as it was with Gideon, 'The Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might.'

I know the way is very full of snares and stumbling-blocks; and if we hold our heads high in self-confidence, we shall stumble against those stumbling-blocks; but if we are brought to any degree

of self-humiliation, and above all to the true fear of God, we shall not be overthrown, but helped forward continually. Do now seek, in much prayer and confession, to get some access to God: I find in my daily walk that nothing short of this, will bring in the sense of his support, and a degree of that peace which passeth all understanding. If you have that peace ruling in your conscience, you will find, as Zerubbabel did, every great mountain becomes as a plain before you; and even while yet we feel afraid to say that we understand that peace, let not the subtle power of self-righteousness prevent us from crying at once to the Lord to heal us and to bless us for Christ's sake. I hope it is with you as with another of our members, who in the prospect of a trial has thus written to me, 'I would not premeditate (which I am often too apt to do), but pray the Lord that if called upon, I may be enabled to testify that it is his leading, and not my own, that has brought me to the point where I now stand; and that I look only to his mercy to establish me, and give me deeper light in his truth.' The simple expression in another, of strength in weakness like this, is always very encouraging to me. B. G.

LETTER II.

Hertingfordbury, *August* 5, 1836.

I FIND it is true that the Lord will empty us, and convince us of sin continually, if he be pleased to give us understanding in the true and hidden way of life through the faith of his own operation. This emptying, this conviction is ever crucifixion to the flesh. Now will your friend bear with my plainness, or will she think I speak without cause? I can only say for myself, 'Behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.' I am not free myself from the charges I make against others, but I trust the Lord works in the inward man to show me the desperate deceitfulness of my heart, and so to speak a word in season to others.

I would say then to your friend, did she ever read of a prayer like the following, and know who made use of it? 'God, I thank thee that I am not as others are, Socinians, Pelagians, Arminians; or even as this Pharisee! I renounce my own works; I give to thee the whole glory of my salvation.' I believe you know one who often prays in this manner, I am sure I know another: for if the Lord enable us to search our hearts, and we have attained some understanding in the letter of the truth, the kind of religion expressed in that prayer will ever set forth the workings of that living body of death within us, which made the apostle to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am!' and David to insist upon this deep truth, 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' The deep experience of these things will bring forth a language very different from this:— 'I am a firm believer in the doctrine of an overruling providence, and yet no one can have a greater dread of leaning to my own understanding, and wandering into a wrong path. So likewise,

although I have no fear of being disinherited by my heavenly Father, no one can have a greater fear of acting contrary to his will. I would avoid his foes as my most deadly foes,' &c. Perhaps it may be said, 'Why is this wrong? Does not David say the same, Psalm cxxxix. 21? Are we not to attain to the full assurance of faith?' I would answer, This is true. But then it is an amazing act of God's power to effect this grace in the sinner's heart, and it is proved to be so by the difficulty of the attainment and the transient visitations of the Spirit, in which with a humbled heart we can glorify God by any such expression. David, stricken through and through with the awful light he describes in the 139th Psalm, was so favoured to discern the work of God in his soul, as to cry out, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?' but he elsewhere cries out of the depths, 'I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.'

Oh, how we shall be confounded, when we feel the bad fear, the legal fear, the spirit of bondage fighting and for a time prevailing over the fear which is a strong refuge within us! How we shall be convicted of cleaving to our own understanding, of fearing, hating, and turning away from the light, because of outward consequences, because our dignity, or our care, or our credit, or our fortune is threatened or affected. And thus by all these things we shall be brought down to come as very sinners indeed, and to put our mouths in the dust. Then the doctrines of God's eternal election, of Christ's efficacious redemption, of the Spirit's effectual working will be indeed needful to our souls. And the text, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure,' will appear in a very different light than before. And this humiliation, and fear, and tribulation, both outward and inward, under the guidance of the God of all grace, shall prove that needle's eye, through which such rich camels as we are must pass to the kingdom. May the Lord mercifully grant us grace to stand in this evil day, and not suffer your friend to be beguiled by any airy inflating letter gospel, which leaves the soul in ignorance of the substantial truth, and the real work of the Holy Ghost. May she cry as your dear mother did, 'O set me on the Rock that is higher than I,' and with the same blessed effect.

Your very sincere friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER III.

Sept. 24, 1836.

I CAN truly say I was pleased and encouraged respecting you, by my last conversation. I am glad to learn that the Lord seems to make his word quick and powerful in your heart; and I feel the more thankful on this occasion because I believe it is his application to your soul; for I knew nothing of those temptations and spiritual sins in your heart which you say my preaching seemed to you directed against. If this be of the Lord, then, it is for good; wherefore remember his word, 'that men ought always to pray, and not to

faint.' For this is true, 'Happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.' Remember also, his whole work in your heart, if, as I hope, a member of Christ's mystical body, is to humble you and to exalt Christ. You will not like the humbling; you will find, as I do, that in the carnal nature you are at all manner of devices to avoid the humiliation, and to bolster up a kind of confidence or self-complacency: but if the Lord have mercy he will not allow it; your ships for gold shall be broken, and you shall be made to feel yourself poor and needy, destitute and desolate indeed, that in the end—What? That you 'through his poverty might be rich.' Therefore earnestly entreat that merciful Lord Jesus to enable you to put your mouth in the dust, and to take up the cross daily and follow him; not to seek for great things either in the church or in the world, but (as he sweetly says to Baruch) that your life may be given you for a prey, that your soul may be saved, that you may shout Salvation to the Lamb to all eternity when your warfare here shall be accomplished. I know how the great enemy tries to beguile us every one to undervalue this first and greatest of all blessings, this inestimable pearl of price, the attainment of salvation; therefore I write thus.

I was afraid, after my former conversation with you in your brother's house, that the enemy greatly obscured your view of the difference between the form of the truth, and its quickening, humbling power. I was afraid lest you should be deceived by that specious device of Satan by which he at this time beguiles many to mistake carnal conformity, or indifference to the truth, for Christian charity: and there is great and perpetual danger of this snare, because of the worldly tendency in the heart to escape from reproach, and to secure an easy path. I find the danger of this snare, and of others also, continually; and am obliged, being afraid in consequence, and sensible of my blindness and ignorance, to go on crying to the Lord for light and help. I trust he will keep both of us in this frame continually; so shall his word be verified in our eternal salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember always that the faith which comes from God, will infallibly lead to him. You must ever beg for that faith, and the effect shall follow. Every trial and mortification which happens to you, either from the world or the church of God, will have a tendency to show you more and more your absolute need of Christ, and so to bring forth this cry, Lord save, or I perish! If through grace enabled to set the desire of his favour stedfastly before you, thank him that he prevents you from finding rest in the favour or approbation of others.

Now what shall I say to your sister? I have read her letter, and it has touched my heart deeply, and I do hope that the Lord will be her confidence. I feel also for her husband, because I know that his trial also is great. My prayer has been, and I trust by God's mercy

will be yet more abundantly in her behalf, that God may enable her with a single eye to set him alone before her, and to act in his fear, and by his direction in all things. This furnace will manifest the nature of the spirit she has received. If, as I do indeed greatly hope, it is from the Lord, it will bring her to him, though her nearest friends should prove her greatest affliction. The Lord will keep her from every wrong compliance on the one hand, and from untempered zeal on the other. The Lord enable her to show the real blessedness of the religion whose power she feels, by the fruits of patience, longsuffering, tenderness, spiritual discretion, real kindness, and at the same time by faithfulness to the cause of God, watching the work and the presence of his Spirit; so that her husband also, through God's mercy, even without the word, may be won by the conversation of his wife, while he beholds her 'chaste conversation, coupled with fear.' Her adorning not that outward adorning which the world admires, but the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit, in the sight of God of great price. Let her rest assured that if the Lord have implanted the seed of his grace, she will one day find this severe trial is ordered in infinite wisdom, and in tender love. May his grace be with her.

I am your very sincere friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER IV.

Sept. 30, 1836.

I AM only able this day to write you a very few lines: but I can truly say that I have prayed much, and hope to be intent in prayer, that the Lord would show his mercy to you and to others visited by such trials. Remember that the way of life is declared to be a way of much tribulation. My hope is that the Lord will give you that spirit of prayer which will enable you continually to bring all things to him—your own case, the cases of your husband and your children. He can make a way for you, in which you shall be enabled to walk and to praise him. 'Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' That is one lesson hard to be learnt, but very glorious. Here is another still harder, because of our very evil hearts—'Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.' When the Lord draws nigh to take this vengeance on those whom he forgives, our courage fails indeed. Yet now I say, and I know it is true, If every trial, every conviction of sin, unbelief, rebellion, brings you to the Lord Jesus in confession and supplication, you shall surely find that the eye of the

Lord is upon you for good, and not for evil. May the Lord direct and bless you and those dear to you for Jesus Christ's sake, is the prayer of Your sincere and faithful friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER V.

Hertingfordbury, *Feb.* 9, 1837.

I HOPE you will excuse my addressing you a few words on the subject of our late conversations. Some things you said made me feel much for you. If only by the mercy of God a real anxiety should be awakened in any one, the final issue of it will be even salvation.

You said, 'For my part, I know I am ignorant of religion.' If this confession be unfeigned, surely it will lead to the prayer, 'That which I see not, teach thou me' (Job xxxiv. 32). I can truly say, that though I made a great profession and a great stir in preaching and talking to people for several years, I never received one jot of that teaching which gives me some understanding in the word of God, and a real effectual support in all the trials which beset me, till I acknowledged my ignorance, felt I was indeed blind, not discerning the truth; and, in this feeling, turned away from all hope in man or myself, to God in prayer—the secret prayer of the heart, in many doubts and fears, yet with an inward support from the testimony of scripture that 'He turneth him to the prayer of the poor destitute.' Now I can say, in a measure, that however little desirable my present condition may seem to many, yet, I have meat to eat, which the world knoweth not of. You said, 'I know I have received the word of God by the wayside, on stony ground, and among thorns; but I never yet received it on good ground.' The same say I of myself, as even now true: as often as I read, pray, meditate, or preach, if I cannot distinguish between my own work and God's work in me, I am only conscious of evil. Now you will say of yourself, 'I never could make that distinction:' I know it; neither could I, till gradually, and after long prayer and confession. This ignorance and blindness which is in us by nature, is part of that which we must confess: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just (through Christ) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' The Lord dispose your heart in faith and in patience to try this, and I know you will find it true. Again, you said, 'If you have this peace you speak of, why do you seem to keep it to yourself, why not give it us, why not go to the alehouses &c. and press it on them all? My soul is of as much importance as yours, why should I be left out?' I answer, It is my continual desire and my prayer to be enabled so to testify the truth which I know in my heart to be saving, as to convince others. But as Isaiah long ago said, 'Who hath believed our report?' The Lord said to Nicodemus when he came by night, 'We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness' (John iii. 11). I will tell you now, The bar in the way is the lust and

pride of our hearts, the love of this present evil world. If we see this with fear, and begin to cry to the Lord, here is the first motion of the Spirit beginning to contend with the spiritual death and fixed enmity against God, which are in us. Then we shall gradually come to the knowledge, to the belief, to the love of the truth, and be saved. If the grace of God thus work in you, at times you will be made to see the saving truth so clearly, that you will say, 'I will go to all my worldly friends and explain it to them, surely they must see it.' Then you will find upon trial, that all your words seem foolishness to them. Luther's friend Melancthon, a most tender, judicious, learned, and humble man, found this to his amazement. So also did the apostle Paul when he wished to remain in Jerusalem, as being sure they would receive his testimony; and could hardly be persuaded that the Lord knew better. Acts xxii. 17–21. Again, you said, 'If I yield my mind to believe these things, I am afraid of the consequences; I shall' &c. Oh, how my heart sympathised with you while you spake those words, knowing how the same fears often beset me, and seem strong enough to drive me back to the world! These (I refer to the Pilgrim's Progress) are the chained lions, which terrified Christian. Now you said besides, 'How kind Jesus was, how kind he was to Nicodemus though he was afraid to come boldly.' Just so; and now can you go to him yourself, and see whether you do not find that he is equally kind to you? I know not how nor why; but as I walked home, meditating on what had passed, and considering how the Lord had been better to me than all my fears and all my hopes too, and had given me strength equal to my day, and shown me that all my trials had been useful to me, I had a strong impression of the account St. John gives of Thomas, and I wished I had repeated it in your hearing. He had said, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails . . . I will not believe.' And soon afterwards, the Lord came and said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; . . . and be not faithless, but believing.' Thus giving him, even what his unbelief (so to speak) required. Now these and the like instances of God's tender mercy do us no real good, if they only excite us to admiration; but if they tend to bring us to the Lord in humble prayer, they become blessings indeed. If then you, in the perception of your ignorance of the power of religion, and of your having perverted the word of God, wonder what the peace of religion is, and whether it exist or not; and are afraid of the trouble and distress outward and inward which may ensue if you should apply your mind diligently to the subject:—if, I say, in the midst of all this, you can find any encouragement to turn simply and only to that most merciful God and Saviour in continual supplication and confession,—oh, do so! for the end of such seeking is heaven. In this spirit of prayer you will find he draws near, and there will be a light upon your path which at first you will not comprehend. I say the Lord will enable you to tread upon the lion

and adder, the young lion and dragon to trample under your feet (Psalm xci. 13); even all those amazing difficulties which intercept the way between you and salvation. I can only pray for you, and that it may please God to give you more spiritual discernment in the way of life for Jesus Christ's sake. Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER VI.

Bengeo, *May* 23, 1837.

I AM sometimes made to feel the responsibility of my situation so forcibly, that I am compelled to write or to speak, where if I could consult my inclination I would wish to be silent. In the self-indulgent profession of the day, ministers and others seem easily persuaded that evils will cure themselves; but for ourselves, if the fear of God be in us, we must look diligently 'lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.' I have felt much fear lately for several of our members, and I cannot feel satisfied without expressing the cause. I am sometimes encouraged in conversation with you, but there seems to me at times a want of distinctness which makes me afraid lest you should be easily misled, and lest you should be resting short of the clear guidance of the Spirit. Remember, the Lord has said, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' If by the mercy of God you feel yourself ignorant and blind, and are afraid, and in that fear are crying and looking upwards, the Lord has set you in safety. While you abide there you are safe; no evil will touch you. I believe it is the will of God to keep many of his people for long here, it is a place for the exercise of faith and humiliation; so though it seem a low place, despise it not. The fear of God is here, which is the beginning of wisdom; and wisdom, we are told, is the principal thing: understanding will follow it.

I feel much for your sister, and the manifold and sore trials which encompass her, and which will not easily be got rid of. She now finds, as we all have to find, that her worst enemy and her greatest trial is within. In reference to her outward course, she does well to bear in mind 1 Cor. vii. 13, 'Let her not leave him.' There, if not absolutely prevented, is the lot cast for her: with continual tenderness, assiduity, faithfulness, patience to bear and forbear: especially considering the question which the Lord asks her—'What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?' I am sure the difficulty on many accounts will be very great, still to keep her heart whole for God: but she must continually say, O Lord, this is not my work, it must be thine; be pleased to divide the sea by thy strength! Let her beware that she indulge not, even in thought, the idea that she knows better than the Lord what is the best place for her. Communion of heart with him, fresh and fresh, day by day, is everything in spiritual life. We cannot attain this out of our place; it is marvellous how, if we choose our own way, the Spirit is

grieved and departs, and leaves us like barren potsherds. But I have reason to believe and thank God that your sister feels these things. May she find a blessing in her own soul, and her children one day call her blessed! I have more fear lest her eyes should become insensibly blinded to some other points, needful to be borne in mind.

If she suffer that enemy, the spirit of the world in any one of its various forms, to usurp ascendancy over her, forthwith she will find that her defence is departed from her. I know it is her ready way to please one whom in all things consistent with godly fear she is bound to please, that she should assimilate to the world. I know it will be exceedingly hard (God's work, not her own) to prevent this. I know the world is in her own heart; and perhaps the evil I allude to is one of her most easily besetting sins. Therefore I hope she will suffer the word of exhortation; for this spirit, whether it lead her to appear too gay in dress or in conversation, or to enter into worldly society beyond the measure which the continual fear and presence of God points out, will surely 'eat as doth a canker.' She will appear, it may be, to gain a little at first; she will be accounted and praised by many as sensible and conciliating; and they will say she is an ornament to religion for complying in these matters; but I repeat again, her defence will depart from her. There will be a coldness and dryness in her addresses to the Lord, (Is not the plague begun?) a losing sight of the difference between a living and a dead profession; fear and self-distrust will abate; but hope and trust in the Lord will abate with them. She will not find such urgent need of continually, nay painfully, besieging the throne of grace with her cries; but she will lose the unction and savour of God's truth, which in that spiritual labour will cause her face to shine. I believe her husband has discernment and taste to know that a sober simplicity in attire is consistent with a polished refinement. If so, she has a hold over him, for let her please him, in consistency with the fear of God. Let her not despise these hints, as only referring to an external matter. I insist upon them, because I see God has insisted upon them very strongly both in the Old Testament and in the New; and if we begin to despise one of the least commandments, we know not to what we shall be left. She knows the words of the apostle Peter, written in the very foresight of troubles like hers; such is God's care for her perplexity—let them dwell richly in her. Let us not despise the heavy, the shameful, the galling cross; it is surely the only way to Christ in his glory, to bear it every day. The Lord make you and all of us willing in the day of his power. So prays Your very sincere friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER VII.

Bengeo, *Oct.* 24, 1837.

THAT searching letter from our mutual friend was doubtless a trial to you; I am sure it was to me: for when I read it in Town, and

compared my own state of heart with the things therein contained, I was ready to say, Woe is me. You see it cuts at the root of a certain easy confidence in which we are apt to indulge; for if our outward troubles are great, we soon secretly feel as if surely we had a claim upon God for his help; not being duly impressed with a sense of our sin, and his infinite holiness; but if the Lord bring us to fall low, and lay hold upon the skirt of Jesus Christ, to touch the hem of his garment, he often first shows us, that he will not endure this our presumption. I believe you are brought into your present state to teach you this heavenly lesson; and for the love of Christ I beseech you, not to refuse the cup which the Lord presents to you. I believe you will in the end find much profit, if the consideration which that letter sets before you, so search your heart as to inflict a deeper wound and awaken more anxious fear, than the increase of your aggravated troubles. Let your confusion be carried before God in prayer, while you set yourself, however feebly, to look to Christ alone. Say, 'How is it, Lord! Is not my faith right, nor my confidence genuine? O open the eyes of the blind.' If you thus call in trouble, I know he will deliver you; will answer you in that secret place of thunder, and prove you in those waters of Meribah, which now beset you (Psalm lxxxi. 7). If there be this continual looking to the Lord, never fear but he will in due time deliver you from all your troubles. It was but one word which brought Jonah out upon dry land, 'The Lord spake unto the fish.' Remember for your encouragement, that the government is on Christ's shoulder, not on ours: so do not form any plans, but commit your whole way continually to the Lord: only as I have observed how entangled you get in your spirit by intercourse with those whose words do not search the heart, I beg you with much prayer to consider the charge given us in Proverbs xix. 27; and to seek continually this favour, that Psalm xliii. 3 may from henceforth and for ever dwell richly in your heart. Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER VIII.

Bengeo, *May* 26, 1837.

I CANNOT but fear that you have been ensnared, and pray that it would please God effectually to deliver you: and when I call to mind many encouraging indications of his grace and favour towards you, may add further, There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that you may be delivered out of it.

God placed you in a very difficult post, in which I fear your spiritual energy prevailed not so far as to enable you to glorify him in all your ways; and in consequence you feel yourself now surrounded and entangled. Remember that such is his power and goodness, that he is able to make this failing to be subservient to a blessed

end, through your humiliation and supplication, to bring you lower in yourself, and to fix you more firmly on Jesus Christ. Therefore be not discouraged, but retire into your closet and pray in secret, and your reward shall be open. You were the head of a family, and as such were called upon in the fear of God to walk as an example to others; but there was a weakness which prevailed not over the temptation, to fight the Lord's battle; for the fear of evil stopped your mouth where you should have opened it; and the evil gathered the more force. You were overcome by their kindness; oh, that it may please God to show them and you also, that the religion, whatever it be, which prevails not over the love of this present evil world, is not of God!

It was not right that your influence as the head should have been so weak as to render the giving up the marks of family religion now tolerable to you. Surely it is a dishonour to God. Yet now, how can you help it? You cannot become one in spirit with their religion without the greater sin; you cannot change that spirit, nor consequently dictate to them. I think this circumstance alone might show you, that you have taken a wrong step. 'My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thine hand with a stranger, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself; so shalt thou prevail with thy friend (v. marg. read.). Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler' (Prov. vi. 1–5). See now, there is one way and only one; and it is the way which you and I approve the least of any: it is by humbling ourselves. This must be before God, and it must be by the power of the Spirit, and it will meeken the heart to stoop low enough before men, even to the turning of our sore captivity. I make no doubt, if the quickening Spirit work, the difficulty of this narrow way will be abundantly impressed upon you: but truly not to discourage you, but rather to convince you that you can do nothing, and therefore God is on your side, who chooses base things, and things that are despised, yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are.

The point you and I desire, is to make manifest that he chooses us as individuals, in whom to glorify his power and grace; we find it hard to make this point clear; let us begin, then, lower; even thus: will he give us encouragement in prayer and watchfulness to discern that he makes choice of the poorest, weakest, and most abject fears and feelings in us, to lay low the Goliath of clear sight, carnal understanding, and fleshly conceit in our own hearts, which withstand his way.

May it please God to make you very tender; to grant you the Spirit of grace and supplication in large measure: anxious not to stand in an evil way, yet at the same time not merely to approve your

way to men; to fix your eye stedfastly on the Brazen Serpent and nowhere else: that the spirit of a little child may be granted you, to which the kingdom of heaven is open, and all its eternal glories. So prays Your very sincere and faithful friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER IX.

Dec. 26, 1837.

I WAS so much surprised at your kindness to me when you called the other day that, as you doubtless perceived, I knew not how to receive or thank you for your bounty at the time. I do indeed look upon it as a proof of God's kindness and care for me, and desire to feel great gratitude to him as well as to you as the instrument; for it is a great encouragement to discover in experience that the Lord knoweth what things I have need of, and has not said in vain, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Indeed, I have reason to hope that since the time I was first brought to any real and spiritual discernment of the saving truth, I have been enabled to seek that kingdom first, for which, as I am deeply convinced, no thanks are due to me, for there has been an extension of the Lord's arm in my behalf, to keep me from following my own devices, and turning aside from his spiritual guidance, because of the difficulties and oppressions of the way, and because of the great power of the body of sin and death which is in me.

Whenever I engage in conversation as I did with you, I have great reason to fear that I bring a reproach upon the cause of God; for it must seem as though my whole bent and design were to enforce the tribulation of the cross, and to leave no room for the consolations of it. But this is very far indeed from being my wish; I know and I find a little, that the consolation is even unspeakable, and such as to justify the language of scripture to the full, in all its richness and glory.

But I am deeply persuaded of another truth also. That there is an extensive cloud of darkness that covers the land, namely, a light, easy profession of gospel religion, which has no power of God's grace in it: and I am sure it is more delusive and dangerous than even the open irreligion of many; because this last is more evidently seen and shunned as wrong; the other is followed as right. I think I have before now mentioned to more than one in your family, a few of the works which, by the blessing and direction of God, opened my eyes to this in a measure; and I think the principal were some of Luther's and Owen's Commentaries, and that little volume of Hart's hymns, which are in the hands of most persons who profess a spiritual religion. When I was constrained, by the merciful hand of God upon me, to consider the language they use, the power of trouble and conviction on the one hand, with the power of consolation on the other, I was brought to feel that my

own religion, such as it was, had nothing of the same. This conviction being attended with fear, and accompanied with a spirit of earnest prayer, I could no longer unite in spirit with those who were insensible to the cause of my deep anxiety. They would not come to what I felt to be the point with me, though they assured me I need not fear, and that they had no fear for themselves, but would even account it wrong to fear, yet they never described the reason of the hope that was in them, nor spoke of anything beyond a mere laying hold upon the gospel for themselves. I must say that I have been increasingly brought to see and to know that the religion of such is hollow, their hope without real foundation, exceedingly far short indeed of what the scriptures describe as a good hope; exactly as Dr. Owen describes of multitudes in his day, 'They might possibly have had trouble in their consciences about sin, if it had not been for their opinion of forgiveness. This hath prevented or stifled their convictions;—not healed their wounds, which is the work of the gospel; but kept them from being wounded, which is the work of security.'

This I believe to be indeed the case now, with many who are exceedingly furnished with gospel doctrines, but can give no account whatever either of the origin, progress, or results of a decided work upon their hearts. The grace of God finds all who shall be saved in darkness, and 'dead in trespasses and sins;' that light discovers to all such, sooner or later, their lost condition and inability to save themselves. This discovery is fearful. I know a hope may come in and support us under it, or there may be a more decided alternation of hope and fear, but there will always be enough of both to give a prevailing direction in the heart towards God, and to put energy into our cry for the manifestation of his mercy. We shall in this state be made deeply sensible of the difference between those two kinds of faith which the apostle speaks of 1 Cor. ii. 5. One is very easy, for it stands in our own wisdom, but the other is saving faith, for it stands out of our reach in God's power: and though sure to all who thus seek for it, they cannot be assured of this themselves till the Lord himself make it plain. Hence there is an exceeding great difference between the new birth itself, and the new birth made clear. All, in whom there is this real seeking after God, and this real sensibility of heart, with fear and trembling at the word, are born again; but their new birth is not made clear, except by the spiritual manifestation of Christ in his mighty power and strength of salvation; which they cannot experience without great conflicts and tribulation, or else they do not perceive its amazing strength and sufficiency. The seeking after this is the giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure, of which St. Peter speaks; and it requires, as I daily find, such diligence to effect this, that every effort to accomplish it is paralysed except one, and that is a certain intense looking to the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, such is the constitution of the people of God in this world, through the

workings and opposition of the body of death which is in them, that this conflict must continue as long as they live: while they enjoy not the prevailing power of God's love in their heart, to seek for it; while they have it, to maintain it; and if they lose it, to get it restored: and except as far as they are enabled to find Christ all in all, they prevail nothing.

The discernment of these things is like a key to open the scriptures from beginning to end: how deep the instruction of them then becomes, how cutting the reproofs, how do they search the secret depths of the heart, and become a sharp two-edged sword indeed, in the Spirit's hand. Thus indeed I do feel how great the consolation must be of the full discovery of that spiritual resurrection with Christ described in the 6th of Romans, to which you referred: and how terrible also the fulness of that death and burial with him described in the same chapter. I believe I have been enabled to make some little advance towards both: the divine confidence of faith described in the close of the 8th chapter, is like the cluster of Eshcol indeed, though not won: but throughout the whole, there is no passage under whose shadow I have hitherto sat down with more delight, and found its fruit sweeter to my taste than this, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' This is the great mercy of Christ to his worthless sheep: that if enabled to discern our real state and condition, whether our attainments are high or low, his good Spirit will guide us in the word to a portion of meat in due season, in the strength of which we shall be enabled to go forward: so I have proved, and hope more abundantly to prove.

Yours with sincere gratitude, B. G.

LETTER X.

Nov. 6, 1838.

. . . I KNOW indeed that many of God's people are for long held in darkness; but then there is this special point to be attended to; namely, that, under the powerful convictions of the Spirit of their sin and danger, this darkness becomes distressing and alarming to them: so that they are brought lower and lower, to renounce even themselves, so that they may but come out of this darkness into God's light. They cannot amuse themselves as other professors can, with very great devotion, zeal, and gospel words, all in the dark as to the real judgment of God regarding them. And in their contending against this darkness, and all the sophistry of those who cry peace to them in it, they find both the fire and the water which are between them and the wealthy place. This is what I have found, and do yet find more than ever: and it is this which I must, if God enable me, press upon those who hear me: for it is in this line of walking alone, however difficult and long continued their trials may be, that

they issue out into the true and undoubted light of God at last. I believe that your poor neighbour, Thomas Candy *, has really proved this. I believe that the confusion of his mind was very great, and he did not for a long time know at all what that clear and undoubted light from God could mean; though he was still made to press after it in prayer and confession, moved with fear, and sometimes quickened by a sensible hope. But when the light really shone, he knew absolutely and without the shadow of a doubt, that it was the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost which had visited him. And though he has doubtless again and again lost this for a time, there has been this special effect, that in the darkness sins so beset him, that he could not rest in it satisfied with a dead hope that everything would be right again. Fear would spring up afresh, God's displeasure would become terrible to him, and in this affliction he cries again, and finds the same light of life restored. And so faith and repentance join in his heart.

With respect to your other neighbour, L. S., I believe she has not hitherto attained by any means whatever to the same spiritual clearness; and I hope, by the grace of God, she will be made deeply and tremblingly aware of this, lest her profession should be found gradually to dwindle away by her believing things which may be pressed upon her by those who have not themselves proved the truth of God. I am sure I do not wish to say this to discourage her, especially as the beginning seems hopeful; for that first lesson she has been taught is a very fruitful one if remembered at all times, namely, that the people of God will be tried and by no means left at ease. Therefore I trust she will be made continually to give the more earnest heed. She says this word was brought to her in a season of great temptation, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee;' and it was as if something said to her that she was not to doubt. Now is she aware that she must go through fire and water to find a further testimony than this? for had it been the full witness of the Spirit on her heart it would have swallowed up all doubt, that she could not have even dared in the fear of God to deny or question the testimony. Now if that comfort were from the Lord he will certainly, in answer to prayer, sooner or later confirm it; but perhaps she has yet to learn that the confirmation will be delayed because of many unsuspected idols in her heart, the secret springing up of self, and the want of a deeply-wounded, broken, and contrite heart.

I am increasingly tried both in my own heart and in my ministry; and tremble at that curse of God which lays hold of many in this day, and some of those who hear me, 'Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand.' I am more than ever afraid that some do not spiritually understand what the

* Letter XII was addressed to Thomas Candy.

principle of divine life in the soul is, and are not cut off from the old killing stock; yet not tremblingly aware of their danger. Under these circumstances I feel my word in this letter to be as nothing in itself; though I am not without a ground of hope that as far as the Lord may give me the bread of life, and enable me to cast it abroad, I shall find it, though it should be after many days. B. G.

LETTER XI.

March 4, 1839.

Mr. H. T. kindly put your letter into my hands that I might see in how friendly a manner you spoke of me. I thank you for it sincerely, and assure you that I should feel rejoiced indeed to be in any measure useful to your soul. You continue in the same darkness, and I must say I hope it is a mercy that you are able to see and to say that it is darkness; for multitudes are in the same state, and yet neither acknowledge nor feel darkness, but fancy they have light enough. They are not anxious for mercy, they think they believe, and yet are altogether walking according to the course of this world. But God forbid that I should flatter you. I write to you in the fear of God, and as his convincing Spirit makes manifest the sin of my heart, I dare not see others who expect my counsel, under any mistake, without endeavouring to point it out. Surely there is yet lacking in you a spirit, which the Lord only can bestow, of simple earnestness to find his mercy made clear to you. Your trouble is very easily diverted, and you are confounded by hearing contrary things from different people, and then not knowing what to believe. This confusion ought to make you very earnest in prayer to the Lord, 'O send out thy light and thy truth;' for when his light and his truth do come, he makes his people to know it: and this would confirm and establish your heart. The effect of this teaching of God would be to humble you very deeply, and make you sensible of your vileness by nature: so that you would then know with delight, that the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood atones for sin, is God; and the Holy Spirit, whose grace overcomes your sin, is God; and that these are both of them in power and glory and majesty equal with the Father: one God in three Persons, to whom alone every prayer of your heart, every spiritual hope ascends, for he is become the God of your salvation. Now if your whole heart desired to know this and to have it made clear to you, so that up and down, day and night you were secretly saying, 'O Lord, show this mercy to my soul,' you would one day know it. But at present you are not so earnestly set on this as I could wish, and when you begin upon religion are more anxious to have some particular hard text explained, which might make your understanding a little clearer, but would not bring this salvation to you at all, than to find this mercy. The text that now perplexes you is the account of Cornelius. Why really I wish with all my heart you were like

Cornelius, then you would soon know Jesus. Cornelius was a Roman soldier, and therefore a heathen by education; who had heard about the God of the Jews, and read the Old Testament and believed it, but had not joined the Jews, nor at that time knew anything about Jesus Christ. Though the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen upon him openly, as on the apostles, yet he had even at that time the secret presence of the Holy Spirit, preparing his heart, making him very anxious, loving, and humble, and very full of prayer. It is evident what he prayed for, by the Lord's answer. For the angel in the midst of one of his prayers came and said to him, Send for Simon Peter, and he will teach thee the way of salvation. Therefore you see he had been praying to know the truth, praying to be directed and taught truly by the Lord. So now, if you in your present darkness feel a desire spring up to pray like him and to continue at it, do so; the Lord will one day answer you. Cornelius was very much afraid of being deceived; wherefore, when even an angel came and spoke to him, he looked up to God, saying, 'What is it, Lord?' Thus when people speak to you, such as I am, or any one else, you must go to the Lord in prayer, though as yet you know him not, and say, What is it, Lord?—Lord, thou must teach me. O send out thy light and thy truth. Now because Cornelius was made to do this, it is evident that the Lord was at work secretly in his heart: so when Peter came, sent by the Lord, Cornelius believed his word, and found the knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins. Peter preached Jesus,—Lord of all, and yet a man; i.e. God and man in one Person, who saves sinners through faith in his blood and righteousness. Then Cornelius knew how he could be saved, then he thanked God, then the Holy Spirit fell on him as on the apostles. Now, by the great mercy of God, go and do as Cornelius did: for you have great reason, and will not find it in vain: but to hear how it was with Cornelius unless you do the same, will prove of no benefit to your soul. The Lord bless these words to your profit for Christ's sake. Amen. B. G.

LETTER XII.

Bengeo, *May* 16, 1839.

I HAVE heard a little of your trials, and of the blessed hope which the Lord causes at times to abound in your heart; and have long felt a wish to write and to tell you that the account of these things has been a comfort to me, and I cannot but feel a great regard for you, hoping that I also am in the same path wherein the great Shepherd is leading you. It once seemed strange to you that the way should be through all the 'tossings and terrifyings' which you have already endured; but I believe the Lord has now taught you that this is no strange thing which has happened to you, as the apostle Peter says in his First Epistle (chap. iv. 12), 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as

though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;' and if you read to the end of the chapter you may see what reason you have to rejoice with trembling.

I was lately very much impressed by considering the words of St. Paul in the 14th chapter of Romans. He tells us to receive 'him that is weak in the faith.' And I believe your trials have taught you how weak we all become, when the true grace of God enters our hearts. Therefore all the saints of God who were inspired to write the scriptures, have great sympathy with those who are thus weak; for they know that such shall be made strong in the Lord. This weakness makes us to tremble at God's word, to be afraid of his judgments, and to cry very earnestly for his mercy. Now men are apt to despise those who are thus weak; but the Lord will not despise them, for they are his workmanship. And they shall every one of them 'be holden up,' for the Lord is able to make them stand (ver. 4). A person who reads that chapter (the 14th of Romans) without any instruction from the Lord in his own heart, does not at all enter into the power of it. For why is it that the apostle is so very tender for the weak? Because his own heart trembles before the majesty and holiness of the Lord. He reproves those who judge and condemn these weak ones, and says, Why dost thou judge and set at nought thy brother? 'For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.' This was the first part which struck me the most; for I felt a little of what it really means. I perceive from the word of God that when the wicked shall stand before that judgment throne in the last day, it shall be to their everlasting condemnation; and that the righteous then will rather sit with the judge, than be judged themselves, as our Lord says to his apostles, Ye shall sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel: and the apostle says, We shall judge angels; and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Therefore it is very certain that his words in this 14th chapter of Romans, include besides the other, a judgment which the Lord will cause to pass in the heart of his people in this world. The same which Jesus Christ speaks of in these words, 'When he (the Spirit of truth) is come, he will reprove the world (that is you and me, if he come to us, who are of the world by nature) of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' He dwells upon this point. He says, We shall all stand before his judgment seat. Yea, the Lord has sworn this, As I live, saith the Lord, they shall all bow to me. Yea, every one of us shall give account of himself to God. When these things begin to come to pass upon us, what shall be said, but that fearful question which the Lord asks, 'Can thine heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?' And here I am sure, 'by strength shall no man prevail.' We must fall as you

fell with your mouth in the dust, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' And this it was which made the revelation of Christ so exceedingly precious to your soul. Oh, how he appeared to you in that day when he magnified his mercy on your behalf, stood between you and all your enemies, and saved you to the uttermost, because it was his pleasure to deliver you! When you saw that the Father was well pleased for his righteousness sake, and the Holy Spirit gave his witness that you were saved through him! then was the Lord's oath fulfilled in a blessed manner in your heart, 'As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me.'

There are many professors of religion in the days we live in, who know nothing and fear nothing of this great work of the Lord; but hide and obscure it, preaching a Christ in the letter; and if ever doubts and fears come in then they quote a promise to heal them; but they know nothing and teach nothing of the Lord's application. Religion is a light and easy thing with them, the way made very easy, but indeed it is not the way of which Christ speaks, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' I was just one of those professors myself six years ago, and I was preaching in the same sort of way; but it pleased the Lord to convince me of my error, and to constrain me to acknowledge that I had been utterly wrong. This Mrs. W. is aware of: but I find but few persons who can enter into my feelings. Since then I have met with many peculiar trials, and am now in the midst of them, and have been cut off on every side from the society and friendship of most, whom before that time I was intimate with. But if I were more deeply instructed in that way which the Lord has shown me a little of, I should count these trials very light. However, he has not left me without encouragement in various ways: and on one occasion did so clearly give me a charge out of his holy word, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days,' adding more words to the end of the sixth verse of Ecclesiastes xi, with great light and divine power with them, that the sure persuasion it was from him encourages me to write this letter to you, with the hope that it is according to his will; and that you will take notice of those points on which I have laid a stress, and seek the teaching of the Lord especially upon them. For, depend upon it, the enemy will strive to pervert you, to make you forsake that deep and tender cleaving to the Lord which you have been brought to, and to get you by degrees as much into the soft, smooth, but utterly unprofitable spirit of many who I doubt not surround you, as he possibly can. But blessed be the Lord for this truth, 'we have an Advocate with the Father;' and the blessed Spirit will enable you, by crying night and day, to prevail over your great adversary to the end.

I was very glad to hear from Mrs. W. that you have a kind partner, who rejoiced for the Lord's mercy to your soul. I do not know anything further respecting her, but I hope she will be like

Manoah's wife, who looked on while the angel of the Lord did wondrously. I was glad also to learn that your children are dutiful and a comfort to you. This is surely the Lord's blessing. They will cause you great and anxious care: for the word is, 'Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' You know a little what his admonition is. He does not smooth over the evil of our corrupt hearts, and tell us we are converted, when we are not, and that saying hymns and chapters of the Bible will be enough to save us. But I find that many professors get into this sort of way with their children. The fear of God will make us afraid of all this. On the other hand, we must be very tender, and loving, and patient, only we must speak the truth to them in love. I hope and believe that you assemble them night and morning and pray, looking up to the Lord to teach you how, and that you read a passage out of his word, which has searched or enlightened or warmed your own heart; and I believe the Lord will bless you in so doing.

I feel greatly obliged to Mrs. W. for kindly writing me an account of you, and so bringing us to know one another. And now I hope you will lay to heart what I am going to say. When you have read this letter look to the Lord for grace to speak to his glory; and when she next comes to see you let her take down from your lips, a full, simple, and orderly account of what the Lord has done for your soul from the very first. How first you began to think upon God, and to be troubled. How he led you to pray to him when you kept sheep on the downs; what your hopes and fears arose from. How he spoke more fully to your soul in your illness five years ago; and how afterwards you declined and went back. How he sought you again, and restored your soul, and gave you more understanding in his holy word. Be not ashamed to proclaim his goodness and your sin; for thus you give him glory.

I send you with this letter a short account of a dear brother-in-law of mine [Lieut. Francis Jeffreys] who died in the Lord on the 16th of last April, as you will see. He was a young soldier; and it was by a mighty hand of the Lord indeed that he was turned to the stronghold of salvation. You may suppose how great a consolation it was to me and to his sister to hear his dying testimony. It was to me he said those words, 'Whatever darkens round you look to Jesus;' and it was to her that he first gave the account of that blessed night when the Lord turned his captivity, and enabled him against hope to believe in hope.

Now I must conclude, earnestly desiring to commend you to the Lord in whom you have believed. He will yet, I am persuaded, humble you and teach you many things in the path of tribulation; and will show that he is able to do for you exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think.

Your affectionate friend in the Lord, B. G.

LETTER XIII.

Nov. 1, 1839.

I AM unwilling to let Dr. F. leave Hertford for Hornsey without conveying a few lines from me. We were very glad to hear a good account from your dear children, and glad also you were able to see our friends in London. I hope it will please God to grant a special blessing, and to encourage and direct you in all things. There is nothing which has encouraged my hope that he will do so, indeed, more than to hear that he has enabled you to find some access in continual prayer, and above all given you some insight by faith into the real power of spiritual religion. You know when the Lord Jesus Christ was spiritually present, how mighty and yet how gentle his power was in commanding a great calm in your heart, and convincing you that he was indeed an all-sufficient Mediator. This is as a key to those words of David, 'My Rock and my fortress,' and is the beginning of what the apostle testifies, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by the Spirit.' You must expect where the Lord thus reveals his grace, that the faith he gives will be tried: and the trial is not light. Therefore remember, (as I trust he will enable me, both for myself and you,) to entreat continually that he will make us strong, not in ourselves but in him. Do pray write to us and tell us how you get on, and what encouragements you find, and may the Lord fill you with joy and peace in believing.

B. G.

LETTER XIV.

[*No date.*]

. . . ANY little indications of a purpose of God crossing our own wills, must, if there be any spiritual faith in us, be very closely and very patiently watched, or we may get involved in very great troubles. Above all, the real thing required, as I am persuaded you know, is a certain humiliation of heart, which claims nothing, and seeks for nothing except for the sake of Jesus Christ. This is itself the hardest thing to be brought to. God must work it in us, and he is able to work it in each of us, and I believe is working it, whenever he enables us only to acknowledge our iniquity in lacking it, and so to beg him secretly to give us this also for Christ's sake. For we must do everything from the beginning to the end by making use of Christ; as set forth to us in that type of the ladder, whose foot was upon the earth, but its top reached up to the Lord in his glory. I cannot but feel very grateful to Dr. F. for the uniform kindness with which he has allowed and indeed encouraged your free intercourse with us. I do most sincerely desire that it may please the Lord to grant that effectual blessing to him as well as to you, which will one day (though always through painful trials)

others: but some way they will not be long in finding out, that whenever they begin to attend to religious authors like Baxter or Doddridge, they become confused: and perhaps when they open here and there and read in Owen or Bunyan they become clear, and feel more deeply. So they gradually learn to leave the former books quietly alone, and to feel a regard for the latter. These words will also begin to sound in their hearts very differently from what they used to do, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' B. G.

LETTER XVI.

Dec. 17, 1839.

I MUST say I felt surprised at ——'s letter; and when I had considered it, was impressed with a conviction that I should write a few of my reflections on the subject. He knows the state you were in when he first brought you to my church, and he now very unreservedly acknowledges that you have found the greatest blessing which can be found on this side heaven, the saving grace of regeneration. I believe, then, if his judgment of these things be really in accordance with scripture, he will feel a necessity of acknowledging, that if I have not been sent to others, yet doubtless I have to you; in which case the fear of God should keep him from so very easily making nothing of my ministry in your behalf, as to hope that you will be induced to forsake it as lightly as we may change our residence. . . .

If indeed he has known, and does daily know, anything of the humbling power of God's applied truth, I am emboldened to say again, that surely a scriptural consistency on his part requires that he should at least withhold from tempting you to set light by the means of instruction which the Lord has blessed to so great and so rare an end (as in this day it appears to be) of breaking your heart spiritually, according to the solemn announcement he makes by Jeremiah, 'Is not my word . . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'

One thing which excites my fear in his letter I must more distinctly mention: not that I mean to make him an offender for a word, but am anxious to know the spirit in which it is spoken. He wishes to send you, in great kindness, his views of Christian experience. Now I am sure the Spirit of truth convinces us when he undertakes to teach us, that all men's views, but most of all our own, upon this great point are absolute vanity, nothing, best concealed: for we are ashamed of them altogether. 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? or being his counsellor hath taught him?' Is not 'his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.' The only important matter then appears, not our views of this great point, but our entrance into it. For though the Lord teaches his people in very different ways

indeed, yet he does teach them all; nor ought our peace to be established, except he very clearly teach us. If then any man tell me how he has been made to feel his natural ignorance; that he only knew of God, Christ, the Spirit and the things of the Spirit, in word and letter, but God awakened him to fear, urged him to cry, and brought him to some spiritual understanding by such or such means; this is profitable and encouraging. If he only warn me of my danger should I be resting short of this spiritual power, and entreat me to look to Christ for power to renounce all things, that I may attain to this spiritual understanding; this also is a profitable warning and direction. But men around us, with the man within us too, will be endeavouring to establish their own views and opinions instead of instructing us to seek God only. And our danger is great in consequence, lest we should be perverted: wherefore on the whole, I dare not to say less to you, and have no need to say more, than that you remember the word continually, which is your sheet anchor through life,—I have prayed for thee, that thou enter not into temptation. B. G.

LETTER XVII.

Jan. 13, 1840.

THE letter from you which your brother put last night into my hand, very greatly affected me; and I felt desirous of writing a few lines to tell you how I have been praying for you this day, in the hope that you describe that same tribulation and consolation which both your brother and myself have, as I trust, for some years past been made partakers of; and if the Lord unite us in the bond of his Spirit, we shall surely love one another. Ever since the Lord awakened my heart to any understanding in his holy word, and to the deep necessity of a consistent walk in it, I have increasingly felt this unity of the brethren as a most sacred gift of God, wrought in the heart of his humbled people by the power of the Holy Ghost, whose real indwelling presence it is, which effects this unity. No words can describe it like those of David, which, though often quoted, are not, as you and I have great cause to fear, nearly so often understood. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' This word 'unity' does not import indifference, nor mere forbearance, nor yet dissimulation; but if we, as the servants of the Lord, made to tremble at his word, and to listen to his voice, attempt fellowship with such as know not in their own hearts what this trembling and listening mean, then we cannot find unity, but one of the other three things I have mentioned, which are none of them blessed, as the unity is. Therefore in the fear of the Lord we are taught to be afraid of these things; and are shown that in our communications with others we stand on very tender ground; and when we are introduced to any as friends, we feel it needful for our own safety's sake to look up to the Lord, and

others: but some way they will not be long in finding out, that whenever they begin to attend to religious authors like Baxter or Doddridge, they become confused: and perhaps when they open here and there and read in Owen or Bunyan they become clear, and feel more deeply. So they gradually learn to leave the former books quietly alone, and to feel a regard for the latter. These words will also begin to sound in their hearts very differently from what they used to do, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' B. G.

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If indeed he has known, and does daily know, anything of the humbling power of God's applied truth, I am emboldened to say again, that surely a scriptural consistency on his part requires that he should at least withhold from tempting you to set light by the means of instruction which the Lord has blessed to so great and so rare an end (as in this day it appears to be) of breaking your heart spiritually, according to the solemn announcement he makes by Jeremiah, 'Is not my word . . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'

One thing which excites my fear in his letter I must more distinctly mention: not that I mean to make him an offender for a word, but am anxious to know the spirit in which it is spoken. He wishes to send you, in great kindness, his views of Christian experience. Now I am sure the Spirit of truth convinces us when he undertakes to teach us, that all men's views, but most of all our own, upon this great point are absolute vanity, nothing, best concealed: for we are ashamed of them altogether. 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? or being his counsellor hath taught him?' Is not 'his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.' The only important matter then appears, not our views of this great point, but our entrance into it. For though the Lord teaches his people in very different ways

indeed, yet he does teach them all; nor ought our peace to be established, except he very clearly teach us. If then any man tell me how he has been made to feel his natural ignorance; that he only knew of God, Christ, the Spirit and the things of the Spirit, in word and letter, but God awakened him to fear, urged him to cry, and brought him to some spiritual understanding by such or such means; this is profitable and encouraging. If he only warn me of my danger should I be resting short of this spiritual power, and entreat me to look to Christ for power to renounce all things, that I may attain to this spiritual understanding; this also is a profitable warning and direction. But men around us, with the man within us too, will be endeavouring to establish their own views and opinions instead of instructing us to seek God only. And our danger is great in consequence, lest we should be perverted: wherefore on the whole, I dare not to say less to you, and have no need to say more, than that you remember the word continually, which is your sheet anchor through life,—I have prayed for thee, that thou enter not into temptation. B. G.

LETTER XVII.

Jan. 13, 1840.

THE letter from you which your brother put last night into my hand, very greatly affected me; and I felt desirous of writing a few lines to tell you how I have been praying for you this day, in the hope that you describe that same tribulation and consolation which both your brother and myself have, as I trust, for some years past been made partakers of; and if the Lord unite us in the bond of his Spirit, we shall surely love one another. Ever since the Lord awakened my heart to any understanding in his holy word, and to the deep necessity of a consistent walk in it, I have increasingly felt this unity of the brethren as a most sacred gift of God, wrought in the heart of his humbled people by the power of the Holy Ghost, whose real indwelling presence it is, which effects this unity. No words can describe it like those of David, which, though often quoted, are not, as you and I have great cause to fear, nearly so often understood. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' This word 'unity' does not import indifference, nor mere forbearance, nor yet dissimulation; but if we, as the servants of the Lord, made to tremble at his word, and to listen to his voice, attempt fellowship with such as know not in their own hearts what this trembling and listening mean, then we cannot find unity, but one of the other three things I have mentioned, which are none of them blessed, as the unity is. Therefore in the fear of the Lord we are taught to be afraid of these things; and are shown that in our communications with others we stand on very tender ground; and when we are introduced to any as friends, we feel it needful for our own safety's sake to look up to the Lord, and

to watch what the effect of their communication is; lest through the snare of the enemy we say too soon, as even a good man did before us, and that repeatedly, 'I am as thou art, my horses as thy horses,' &c.

This is what both your brother and I have felt desirous to be enabled to do; and I may say I feel a hope that you have found an experience of the same, in that conflict of spirit you have had respecting the sovereignty of God, and especially the doctrine of particular redemption. For whatever points are pressed upon us by those who fear God above many, excite great searchings of heart and lead to much prayer; because it is true we must neither magnify ourselves against such, nor on the other hand must we take anything for granted on their word and testimony; and this produces great conflict and trembling in our spirit, in which there is real safety, for it brings us as blind sinners to entreat the merciful direction of the Holy Ghost; and to appeal to him, and to the Son, and to the Father, as the one only God, saying, Hast thou not promised that he shall be granted for Christ's sake to guide us into all truth? I know that though in this secret wrestling of heart externally we stand aloof from all men, yet through it we are still spiritually walking in the unity which David sets forth, and that with all the mystical body of Christ. And when, through the favour of God, the effect of this secret wrestling begins to appear outwardly, all who have wrestled as we have, will take notice of it, and our conversation will refresh them. Then we can go on with David's words, 'It is like the precious ointment.' Now I have only to observe here what the scripture says respecting this precious ointment, 'Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it . . . whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.' But yet, sacred as it is, it is poured out without measure upon the head of our great High Priest, so that it even descends to the skirts of his clothing; and it is there that I hope both you and I may be suffered to approach to find this virtue, even in the hem of his garment: indeed, I believe I have found it many times, and it has been as refreshing as the dew of Hermon on mount Zion to which David goes on to compare it: for the Lord says in Hosea xiv, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel;' and this very influence it is which enables them to grow as the lily, and to cast forth their roots as Lebanon. But where is it that all these blessed effects are perceived? Says David, where the Lord commands the blessing, even life for evermore. Therefore we cannot any one of us exceed the bound which the Lord's sovereignty has made. We may well tremble here and entreat his mercy, but we must not presume, as Arminian teachers do, and call it faith. And if you will allow me here to state my own experience it is this: that when this feeling of the necessity of the doctrines of God's sovereignty and eternal election begins to appear, and to be inwrought into the whole

texture of our religion, the doctrine of Christ's particular and efficacious redemption comes in along with it: we cannot separate them in our spirits, we begin to mark the weight of many declarations in scripture,—His blood 'cleanseth us from all sin.' 'We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' 'When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' (Pray is this true respecting the unconverted?) And it is all the same in the Old Testament, 'No lion shall be there . . . but the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord.' Our whole hope centres here, that the Lord in the good pleasure of his will ransomed us in that day when he made his soul an offering for sin. If so, where he is already entered with his own blood, there shall we also follow him: neither height nor depth nor any creature shall prevent this: and I add further, 'Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.'

I feel a lively hope that the Lord has quickened your brother, yourself, and me, to a spiritual desire to prove all these great words of scripture. And I pray with all my heart that you may find him more and more fully revealed, and saying to your soul, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be;' and that if ever I am permitted to see you again, we may find nothing to do but to help one another in the Lord to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. So prays

Your very sincere friend for Christ's sake, B. G.

LETTER XVIII.

April 28, 1841.

. . . I AM more and more convinced that that inordinate love of human praise of which you speak, is, in its principle, found in all our hearts: and it is not only needful that it should be discovered to us, but brought to Christ, and healed by the application of his blood; which is the hard and the spiritual point. Many will own it; but I do not find so many who really go on to that healing. If it be the case, through the good-will and power of God, that a heart be put within any, which will rest in nothing short of that clear spiritual application, and refuses to be set at rest by confidence in the letter of God's promises, I suppose they will all find many things which surprise them, as I have done. One is, the multitude of professors, (some very earnest and devout in their way,) who cannot understand either our spirit or the object we are pressing after: and from these we are obliged in spirit to separate; not from any who are really tender and anxious in heart, but from all who are obstinately

set in that state of spiritual blindness, though at times very far from being easy in it. Of such, in their present state, the Saviour says, 'Now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.' May God of his mercy grant that we may not be found amongst these in the last day. Better to be alone against them all, than to be one incorporated with them.

Your sister told me you had mentioned some work of Luther on the divine life, as not approving it. I do not know it, at least by that title, but can only wish that we may all of us understand what that precious treasure of the divine life is, as well as that good man did. That is the very point which so few amongst professors clear. They have knowledge, zeal, devotion, and many other things enough, but the whole of a wrong kind, because there is no spiritual life. And we cannot explain what this means; it is God's prerogative to show us: and all to whom he shows it, are brought low and broken in heart.

I thank God since I saw you in the summer, I have found a deeper and more refreshing entrance into this great truth than I could at that time or for long afterwards. Those seasons of darkness are not in vain, if there be a spirit of prayer maintained, and a looking both to and for the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the light returns, we find we have been led on further than before, and by a way we knew not. So in a measure I have found; which leads me to wonder at that sovereign mercy which laid hold of me when I was going down the stream; and brought me by many very painful trials to be faithful to those convictions which to this day many of my former religious friends would have wished me to slight.

B. G.

LETTER XIX.

Bengeo, *May* 4, 1842.

When I first saw you last March I felt much encouraged to hope that weak, feeble, and confounded as you feel yourself to be, the Lord's eye of mercy is upon you. And sure I am, that if he has broken your heart he will one day most graciously heal it. At my second visit I was disappointed to find that you did not keep to the spiritual point in conversing with me. I am sure I did not come to talk about the Establishment, or Dissent, but that you and I might describe our fears and hopes. How we had cried to the Lord in our troubles, and how he had come in by his Spirit, and given us some light and instruction in his holy word, enabling us to feed upon it, and, above all, making 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' more precious to our souls.

I know it will prove a great blessing to you, all day long, in the very midst of your weakness, pain, and grief, to cry more and more for a clear discovery of his mercy to you. This will edify your soul, and also keep you from going wrong, and from embracing error. The Lord will thus enable you to cleave in affection to those who

have this longing of heart after Jesus Christ: and whether, like good Mr. Romaine, they belong to the church, or, like good John Bunyan, they are out of the church, you will perceive that, being of the true church of Jesus Christ, you must unite in spirit with them. But if people come to see you, who either talk only about outward points in religion, or discourage you from earnestly crying for a clear discovery of Christ's mercy to you; if they say there is no necessity for that earnestness, that you may consider yourself quite safe without it, that for their parts, they read in the Bible Christ is the Saviour, and they rest upon that word, and so take for granted he is their Saviour, and you may do the same; if they go on talking thus, I say to you, Beware. Do not follow them, nor believe in them, for they are blind guides; and the Lord Jesus Christ hath said, 'If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' They will either fatally delude you, or keep you all your life long in that dark, cloudy, comfortless condition in which you have been remaining. They will confuse you, because they cannot enter into your trouble, nor feel your fear. They will tell you the trouble and the fear are wrong; whereas in fact God troubles you and makes you afraid, that you may cry in earnest after Jesus Christ, till he is pleased to make his mighty love clear in your heart. And you know that if only you could feel this love made clear, it would make you very happy. I hope then that if I should have an opportunity of coming to see you again, we shall converse about nothing else except this one point only. And after I shall have left, I hope you will endeavour to pray to Jesus Christ, and to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, through him, and watch whether you feel any help or light or clearing in your heart in consequence of my visit; and if so, you will know that the Lord sent me.

I write the more fully to you, because I thought I had reason to believe that surely the Lord had so broken your heart, that except he come and heal it, you never can be happy. And you know he says, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me . . . to heal the broken-hearted.' Still you were evidently under a mistake, seeming to think yourself too bad to come to Jesus, whereas he says in his blessed word that none but such bad ones come to him at all. Therefore you ought to take courage and to say, Lord, I am very bad, and therefore come at once to thee. I hope you do so sometimes; for your words to me were these, 'Yes, surely I feel myself too bad to come to Jesus; yes, bad, bad, bad! but somehow I do pray and beg him to be pleased to save me, and to glorify his own great name in my salvation.' When you said these words, hope came into my heart that you are one of Christ's lost sheep, and that he is seeking you out; and so will one day find you, and lay you upon his shoulder rejoicing; and he himself, as well as all the angels in heaven, will have more joy over you, than over ninety and nine others, who now appear to you just persons needing no repentance. I hope you will read the

15th chapter of St. Luke, and ask the Lord to shine upon it in your heart. Yours for Christ's sake, B. G.

LETTER XX.

June 17, 1842.

When I read the tract you sent to me, I thought I had never seen one which appeared to go so far, without really going any way at all. In the first part of it the author truly observes that persons may easily be self-deceived, that they may flatter themselves that they are religious without being savingly so. I have no objection to make to this, provided he press these truths upon others, in a humble and contrite spirit as regards himself; so that he may not crush the poor and needy, despise those whom the Lord has humbled, or talk to the grief of such as the Lord has wounded. But I fear in that part of his work wherein he speaks of the inefficacy of mourning because of sin, he is hardly aware that this spirit of repentance will be found in all whom Christ will save. The repentance, as well as the faith, are both wrought by the Spirit. The man is justified by faith without works, but he will never apply to Christ without having a broken heart: or, as we may also express it, Christ is never applied to him without bringing him to this brokenness of spirit.

In the second part of the tract, some of the principal doctrines of grace are very strongly defined, and the author says that men must fully and heartily believe them, be assured of God's reconciliation with them through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and thus it will be manifested that they are really safe. But there is no account given of the manner in which the Spirit of God brings a sinner to this establishment of heart in Christ, or maintains him in it afterwards. Now what good will all his strong statements do us, without any knowledge or experience of these? When sinners first begin to find the word of God to enter, their hearts are exercised with fears and hopes which lead them through grace to pray continually for mercy and instruction from the Lord. They are brought down in an humbling manner to prove that the good way is not in themselves, and to look and wait with earnestness for the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ's mercy, the revelation of the Lord's arm (Isa. liii. 1). Thus looking at things unseen, they are brought out of the spirit of the world, kept humble, serious, and simple in heart. When the Lord, according to his word and promise, really reveals Christ, he will not endure that these, his own children, should become puffed up with spiritual pride, or sit down in an easy profession. There is danger of this, because the body of sin and death remains, but the new man formed by grace in their hearts will always fight, and in the end always prevail against that evil. This causes the enduring conflict. Sometimes Christ will be hidden and their souls sifted by Satan. These troubles sanctified, still keep

them humble, serious, and simple in heart: and by the springs of love and fear, they are brought continually to this point, 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.'

It is this walk which the author of the tract describes nothing at all of. He seems to be a stranger to that continual going in and out, of which all truly regenerate and consistent followers of Jesus Christ are most sensible.

Such being the case, I think the writer of the letter [a letter accompanying the tract] is justified in fearing that the effect of it may be Antinomian, and many of the objections he urges against it are not destitute of scriptural support. But I am constrained to add that he himself goes no further than the author of the tract in describing and enforcing the real work of God in the heart. He does not point out the necessity of attaining to any clear work at all, but rather would teach us that we may be satisfied of the goodness or safety of our state without it. This is a contrary but no less dangerous an error. May the Lord open his eyes and ours to see the covering that such a religion affords is too narrow to wrap ourselves in, and through grace to find a better. It is true that a believer must be afraid of sin, mourn on account of it, be afraid of God's judgments, and tremble at his word. But it is as certainly true that he must also be brought to find the Lord revealed as his reconciled Father in Christ, and to the clear witness of the Spirit of adoption that he has passed from death unto life. This the writer of the letter does not the least show us, which could hardly be if he really knew it. I suppose that the author of the tract is of the two, the sounder in theory. I am sure that the teaching of the Spirit of God will bring us to prize, as inestimable, the doctrines of the efficacy of grace and redemption, and the stability of the covenant of salvation. But then Hart speaks truly when he says,

> 'Dry doctrine cannot save us,
> Blind zeal, or false devotion:
> The feeblest pray'r,
> If faith be there,
> Exceeds all empty notion.'

To hold these doctrines only in an enlightened judgment is the high road to Antinomian presumption; but to be brought to hold them fast, by an experimental discovery of them as our stable and only hope, is always both humbling and sanctifying.

In my own former profession I did not err with the writer of the tract, but with the writer of the letter. But it pleased God to awaken my conscience, to bring down my heart before him, to open my ear to discipline, and to begin to reveal in me the hidden path of life. I cannot of myself convince others, but I can say, The Lord who has convinced me is able to convince them. And I know that you will join with me in the prayer that he may do so. B. G.

LETTER XXI.

[Concerning another work by the same author, Mr. Gilpin writes on a later occasion:—]

He gives nowhere any description of the beginning and carrying on of a real work of grace in himself. Not that he was bound to do so, but the manner of his doing it, and the account given, would have proved a touch-stone. At one period he describes himself and his Rector as both being in a state of great bondage; and in this part there is a strangeness which made me feel many misgivings. Simple believers are for the most part preserved from such odd ways, as that a minister sent of God should stand up in the pulpit, and, instead of preaching, request the people to follow him to his own house and pray for him. I desire not to judge severely, I am weak myself, but I can say hitherto the Lord has kept me from such embarrassment. I think also that though good men may be left for a time to such confusion or greater, they will afterwards be humbled for it, feeling there was grievous fault in themselves. I do not think the God of order is the director of such things. I am always afraid of odd ways either of speaking or acting.

The true work of grace will always be accompanied with strong love; and when God blesses the ministry of a man, there will be a strong uniting bond between him and the children whom God has given him. This will not show itself in vehement words, but in actions. I am sure I have felt this, and may be allowed to say so, because it has stood greater trials than the withdrawing of an episcopal license. How came the bond in the writer's case to be so very soon and easily broken? I do not mean to say that such an event might not be consistent in him with the fear of God, but it requires a satisfactory explanation, which he has not in any degree given. He seems to me to have been too ready to suspect that, on account of the bishop's conduct, God intimated that he should no longer officiate in the Establishment, unless he had some scruples of conscience against conformity, and if he had, how came they to be set at rest by his hearing of another curacy? It is not enough for a man just to say as he does over and again, 'The Lord led me to do so and so,' we want to know in such difficult circumstances what it was which he considered as the leading, and especially whether a fuller and deeper application of gospel truth was carried on in his own soul under all this leading. I verily believe that, without this, what we may call 'leading' is nothing better than our own fancy.

I do not deny that he makes many good observations, but the whole appears to me so mingled and debased by the leaven of what I have hinted at in this letter, as to leave me greatly in doubt whether his spirit will bear the trial which the Lord will yet appoint for him and his work too.

And this observation leads me to conclude with one more, which may God enable us to lay to heart. This trial of the work,—how

slight a matter it once seemed to me, compared with what I now account it! how little do we know of it yet, compared with what God will show us! I have hope of God and heaven, says Ignorance (in Pilgrim's Progress), because I think of them and leave all for them. That I doubt, replies Christian, for to leave all is a very hard matter, yea harder than many are aware of. Truly our corrupt hearts are a great depth. They are covetous and worldly, and continue so; and yet will often allow us to sacrifice to God and conscience, property and honour too, all without really sacrificing the very inwards of our pride. This pride unbroken, will ruin all; and makes many showy professors to end at last like Esau in selling heaven for a mess of pottage, or Judas in selling Christ for a little money. In saying this, I have not the writer only in view, but am impressed with the necessity that both he and ourselves should know this corruption to be in us, and be saved from the guilt and power of it. Which is the prayer of

Your sincere friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER XXII.

Sept. 18, 1844.

. . . In all disputes, such is our great infirmity, it is too certain that there are faults on both sides; and neither party is a fit judge of the extent of their own part in the offence given: so that, as far as my own personal experience goes, I may safely say that, except I am made to humble myself, the sting of enmity is not removed out of my own heart. And this we ought to do, i. e. humble ourselves, without seeking to humble the other party too, or else we are not really sincere. Berridge says something to this effect, The grace of God makes me very censorious against myself, and very lenient to the faults of others. . . .

I cannot close my letter without a further remark which I could wish may be received, as I hope it is made, in a right spirit. Your letters seem for the most part to express agreement and even unity with my principles. In creed I do not know that we differ, but are we agreed in spirit?

Since it pleased God to begin to open my eyes, I have been wholly unable to find spiritual unity where I blindly hoped that I found it before. When I saw (to mention one example) that after the agreement in principle with me acknowledged by Lady B., she could easily maintain her religion where it would have been death to mine to enter, perceiving that difference in spirit, I was led to say, Can these two religions be really the same? And there the unity was at an end. I believe to this day, and that increasingly, that this separation on all sides, supposed by many to be only bigotry, is a part, and yet only a very small part, of that needful circumcision of heart which the scriptures speak of. I have never felt satisfied that this extensive truth has been opened to you, so as to bring

forth its practical fruits. Now by these practical fruits I do not mean the gloomy chilling religion of the monk's cell, though many ignorantly suppose that we teach so, for oh how one single drop of that heavenly oil of the Spirit's divine communion causes a man's face to shine! but the fruits I speak of spring from such a reverence and awe of the Lord's holy majesty and grace as to keep down all spiritual lightness, and detach us from all unity with those who have neither the lively waiting for, nor discernment of this kingdom of heaven upon earth.

Real spiritual LIFE is a great, a rare, an inestimable blessing. It is this which enables the soul to feel keenly, mourn patiently, and rejoice unspeakably. It is this which makes us fear and tremble where the dead fear nothing, but rather laugh our fears to scorn. It is this which teaches us to discern the real unity of the Spirit, the real love of the brethren, and makes us to abhor the false imitation of these things shown by many whose hearts are not in unison with the humbling self-emptying truth. Indeed it is a most weighty reality, that patching the new upon the old will never do, but to be made a new creature.

The Lord grant this for Christ's sake. B. G.

LETTER XXIII.

. . . On the other hand, I am very much afraid, in myself and others, of a legal spirit. It is a most terrible enemy, and yet so subtle that those who are most involved in it, perceive it the least. Such are oftentimes very ready to reprove and exhort others, and be very faithful to their souls, as it is called, whereas in this spirit they are never faithful to their own. God says to us when we are in this spirit, 'Be ye far from thence: let the work of this house of God alone,' as Darius said to the Apharsachites (Ezra vi. 6, 7); and Christ's word to us is this, 'Cast out the beam out of thine own eye.' I find these things in the application of them fearful and humbling; and I believe the more they are laid to heart the better. . . . B. G.

LETTER XXIV.

May 21, 1845.

. . . As it pleases the Lord to appoint severe bodily infirmity to be one of your constant trials, I hope you will be enabled to bear the cross and find it a blessing, according to this word, 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'

I know you are in an intricate and painful path. None but the Lord himself knows how to guide you and teach you to profit in it. I entreat you to pray that you may be kept increasingly sober and watchful, following hard after the Lord, but never on any occasion

stepping before him. This has been my earnest prayer for myself many years, and I hope the Lord has answered it; yet sometimes, especially lately, I have had many sharp trials upon that point: for it has pleased God to lead me through dark paths, wherein I have felt much the strength of unbelief, rebellion, and spiritual ignorance in my heart. The discovery of these evils is painful, and the power of them is very awful. I am afraid of being left in such a place, and earnestly entreat the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes I have found a little help, and light has come in, in which I have been enabled to look back and see that the Lord has been working good to me by painful means, and the hope of this light increasing, makes me to press on.

'True, 'tis a strait and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint.'

Through all I am persuaded of one thing, that as I can find advantage and profit nowhere without the Lord's blessing, so I am safest and in the way of finding that blessing, by abiding stedfastly in the place which he appoints. I feel myself very unfit to be a teacher of others, but my unfitness makes me pray the Lord to be our Teacher himself; and if I thought myself fit, and so felt independent of him, I should be in a still worse case. So you, with your sickly frame, many infirmities &c., know not how you can glorify God; but you must patiently abide, and ever call in the help of the Lord Jesus the strength of the weak: thus you will surely prove one day what he can do.

B. G.

LETTER XXV.

Jan. 10, 1846.

If the Lord has begun a spiritual work in you and me he will go on: but as our old friend Mrs. Judd used to say, He will work by littles and littles. The fear many have expressed respecting your case will prove to you a rich blessing in disguise, if, in consequence, you shall be enabled to give diligence to make your calling and election sure. I would have you to recall to mind how the Lord once spoke upon your conscience, and how unfaithfully and treacherously you departed from those convictions. Now perhaps it is because the Lord loves you, that he calls your sin to remembrance, and makes you to find trouble. I only desire for you that you may be enabled to flee to Jesus, and in that case I am sure you will find that he will not upbraid you.

I have continued myself to be much tried. The day before yesterday was a sad day to me: I found much darkness, hardness, pride, and rebellious murmuring of heart, and no sense of the Lord's mercy; but I prayed, though the words seemed to freeze on my lips; and yesterday afternoon I felt a change; something of the blessed sorrow of the broken heart, which makes Jesus precious, and brings love for him into the heart; and it was sweet to me to think of the

message he sent to his tempted and afflicted servant, John the Baptist, who, when he was in prison, sent to spread his doubts and unbelief before him. 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' So I many times feel. But Jesus replied, 'Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.' These words are spoken to a tried, and afflicted, a tempted, and a trembling generation, who are always fearing lest they should be offended, seeing their sin and unbelief are oppressive to them: but because they can mend nothing except by sending messengers (prayers) to Jesus, therefore behold the blessing comes upon them; and the man whom the Lord blesses is blessed for ever.

That you and I, and all the dear friends, may inherit this blessing, is the prayer of Yours to serve in the Lord, B. G.

LETTER XXVI.

Maney, Sutton Coldfield, *Dec.* 26, 1846.

I AM often led to consider your case, and to pray that the Lord may have mercy and enable me to watch over your soul, himself delivering you from the power of evil, and making you meet for his kingdom. I feel your case to be a trying one, because of the great abundance of false light which has continually obscured you, which is the most dangerous kind of darkness, as Christ has said, 'If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!' I believe, if the Lord have mercy, he will not clear this all away at once, but gradually bring down your heart with labour, as it is said in Psalm cvii. You will very often be hoping that this labour is come to an end, and that all will be right, but again and again he will teach you this hard lesson, till it really makes your heart sore and soft: 'If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.' It is a trying case to have such abundance of scripture words, and such a readiness to take them all, and yet, as they do not work aright, to be obliged to give them up, as you have so often been. To find some of your friends led in a more simple, consistent way than yourself, so that they get before you. Now this is trying; but it will be your mercy to own in this the mighty hand of God. Who knows but that this humbling dispensation may be the medicine, which Christ the good Physician gives to purge your pride?

May the Lord enable you, first of all, to be very patient. Be not hurried: for your case is not one which can be cleared very speedily; I think it will be found true, what Christ says in another case, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' That fasting in your case may especially mean, that you must not be ready to think that you have clean escaped. I perceive in your letter you call the last change you describe from the words 'Stand fast,' a

deliverance. I advise you to wait, and cry, and pray that you may be prepared for the storm which will surely come to try the nature of this deliverance; whether it will bear much opposition, and deliver you from making your own tongue to fall upon yourself (Psalm lxiv. 8), which, I think, describes the evil that has often befallen you. I pray God you may receive this letter in love, as I send it with a real desire for your benefit; and I know that if instead of despairing and fretting with the sorrow of the world, you patiently cry, pray, and watch, day and night, you will one day find this asked, 'Is there anything too hard for the Lord?' and will reply, No, Lord, not even making the crooked straight in my heart. May the Lord grant it, is the prayer of

Your faithful friend and minister, B. G.

LETTER XXVII.

Maney, Sutton Coldfield, *Dec.* 29, 1846.

. . . I FELT much one word you speak of, David's prayer, 'Send thee help from the sanctuary.' Oh, how my heart has hovered over that sweet psalm in many trials and great desolation of spirit: 'The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.' The sweetness of it lies here, that Christ was thus pressed himself, and the Lord sent him help in that invisible manner: and it is a pledge to us, that we shall not cry in vain, if, not our works but Christ's atonement, not our prayers but Christ's intercession, be our dependence indeed. The Lord increase in you that precious faith.

Will you suffer me to give you one word of exhortation, lest the enemy should take advantage of you? You describe, I do verily believe, a true work of faith in your own heart, but you are continually prone to describe it in a manner too flowery: I mean your language is too flowery. Now I am very apt to get into this way myself, and therefore I caution you, because I feel it unawares does me harm. For the Lord is in very serious earnest in the day when he deals with us, and for our sins brings upon us the trouble, though he mingle it with his richest mercies in Christ; also the devil is watching narrowly to overthrow us if he can. If at such a time as this, we suffer our fancy to work, we are too apt to begin and think it pretty, and to look more at it than at Christ's beauty, and then we begin to sink amain, and lose our stedfastness. B. G.

LETTER XXVIII.

Bengeo, *April* 15, 1848.

. . . IT is more than fifteen years since I first began to feel the necessity of the things stated in this letter, and I must still acknow-

ledge I have learnt but little; yet that little, because God's power was in it, quickly overturned all I thought I had learned before. It opened to me the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, in a way I never could have imagined. It brought me down very low, and yet out of that weakness I can still more and more say, that Christ's strength was showed. So that my mouth has been opened in the ministry by that which seemed calculated to shut it, and I have perceived that Christ quickened others by words which he first made quick and powerful in my own heart. I have been often misrepresented, yet obliged for the most part to abstain from vindicating myself. . . . I hope that this has been according to my measure, committing myself into the hands of him who judgeth righteously; and I have found God's blessing to be in it; and I hope to find a continuance of that blessing, if enabled to continue still committing my cause to God. . . .

In answer to many fervent cries, it once pleased God to comfort me (I remember the spot and the time) with the power of these words, which I had not been at all thinking of, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger' (Psalm viii. 2). This has proved an effectual watchword in my heart from that day to this. I have always trembled lest I should have made a mistake, which has kept me still praying, but I have been more and more satisfied that I have made none. And I may even add that when our late affliction disturbed that hope in me again, it was revived in this way, that the word should yet go on and prove a blessing, if we continue to be 'babes and sucklings' still. How precious has this made the apostle Peter's charge, 'As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word.' And God enable me daily to make this my first desire. . . . I look upon all these to have been great mercies, as respected myself and many more; brought about by the effectual power of God, to show how good he is, and how safe it is to trust in him, and not to fear what man can do unto us. For how evidently the Lord knew my affliction and my reproach, and how to relieve them both; and has cut off occasion from any who desired occasion to find fault with me for pursuing a course which I am even now compelled to say, that in like circumstances I should be obliged to pursue again. . . .

I believe this has been the Lord's way of doing good to many. It is only the old battle which we shall find still to be renewed again and again in different ways and quarters, as long as the church is militant: only may it please God that you and I may both be on his side in the battle. Would to God that I could persuade many, who at present little suspect how nearly it concerns them, to come and see the works of the Lord, what desolations he has made in our parts of the earth. That we may be still indeed, and know that he is God; and that all who trust in him may say, The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah (Psalm xlvi. 8–11).

I may indeed add that this sore affliction has been useful to me. It has driven me thousands of times to the throne of grace. It has often humbled me, and made me to cease from my own ways and thoughts both. It has shown me that with a high hand Christ yet sends fire on the earth, and stays it not, if he find it already kindled. It has shown me that it is not a mere alteration of views, a holding in theory one set of doctrines instead of another, that is disputed: but that whenever the real truth of grace enters the heart, the enemy, if permitted, will roar amain, and fill both hearts and houses with his havoc.

Here I have been brought to some understanding of what Luther vigorously expresses in the following words, taken out of his commentary on Genesis: 'This Faith is a living and powerful thing. It is not an idle cogitation floating on the heart like a goose on the water, but as water, heated by the fire, is no longer cold but hot, and wholly different from before, so Faith, the work of the Holy Spirit, forms another mind and other senses, and makes a totally new man. Faith is therefore a laborious, difficult, and powerful thing. And if we would rightly judge of it, we are more acted upon by it, than act it, because it changes the mind and senses, and embraces things that are absent, yea, contrary to our reason, and judges them to be present. And this is the reason why the faith of all is not according to the hearing of all—for few believe.'

If this powerful sentence help you, as I believe it has helped me by God's mercy, you will be glad I have written to you this long letter.

B. G.

LETTER XXIX.

Feb. 16, 1849.

I HAVE been thinking of your case and praying for you, and this morning I have been led to meditate a little upon part of the 31st Psalm: 'Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.' May the Lord open your heart and mine to believe this, and to find it fulfilled. When I have heard both of you describe how the Lord led you of old, and caused you to love his truth, I have believed with all my heart that the work was of God, and that therefore your faith shall overcome the world. Count not the trial you are now under to be a strange thing, but remember the Lord brings it upon you in order to prove you, and you will find a sweet relief only by attaining to the prophet Micah's spirit, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause.'

If any are unkind to you, I am grieved for it. If any slight you or stand in doubt of you, I am grieved for it. But you know him

who 'came unto his own, and his own received him not.' If his Spirit be truly, as I believe, in you, you will follow him through similar trials, and that in his meekness. You are not so ill-treated by any of the children of God as many of the Lord's chosen ministers have been, indeed sometimes even one by another. You know that Luther never could receive Calvin; but Calvin used meekly to say, 'Though Luther should even call me a devil, yet will I own him as a blessed minister of Jesus Christ.' Now, what a trial must have taken place in that good man's heart, before he was brought to such a tender meekness! If the Lord be pleased to treat any of us in a similar way, can we be happy till we say, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'

I have very long taken notice of one thing as surely true, viz. that the Lord is pleased to allow many mistakes among his people for the trial of each of them. The contentions of Leah and Rachel, however painful, must be allowed, though they are the fruitful mothers of Israel: and depend upon it the blessed Refiner will by these means burnish each of them. But, my dear friends, when you spoke to me the other night, your own spirits were fretted and angry: and as I told you, I am quite sure if the Lord loves you he will bring you to see that as long as that fretting and anger continue, he has something against you which must be purged out. This fretting and anger make you to see many things in a wrong light, and to find fault with some without cause. I do not say you have no cause of offence from any, but I say that the right way for you to take is to make the least you can of it, and to lay hands first on the enemy of God within you, even the angry spirit, which Christ's living grace will enable you to crucify: and then you will not only find peace, but be yourselves peace-makers, whom the Lord will bless (Matt. v. 9).

I cannot forbear hoping I shall soon be able to mingle heart and soul with you, and that the Lord will favour us to be three humbled sinners together, not having one stone to cast at others, but having no mercy at all on the pride of our own hearts, for that is our lawful enemy which the Lord has devoted to utter destruction; and if we make a covenant with such an enemy as that, it will surely be a snare to us. The meek and lowly Saviour be your strong deliverer. So prays Your unworthy minister and friend, B. G.

LETTER XXX.

Bengeo, Hertford, *March* 4, 1853.

I MUST not long delay writing, though only in few lines, to thank you for your very kind and welcome letter. It gave me much concern to hear of your severe illness, and I am glad to learn that there appears a prospect by the blessing of God of your health being materially improved by the treatment you are now under. Your letter in another respect was truly comforting, and made me

thankful to the Lord in your behalf; I can indeed hardly say I felt this effect on the day I received it, for I was in a state of painful trial myself, my hope almost gone, my heart very hard, and the prospect most gloomy. I cannot speak as many do, and as through the Lord's great mercy you do, of the clear and blessed waymarks such as you found in the words, 'I will lead' &c. Perhaps few know my inward and painful exercises on that account, which have lately greatly increased; the Lord's dealings with me respecting my ministry, both here and especially at Hitchin, having often reduced me to great fear. When love and hope and tenderness seem overwhelmed by hardness and unbelief, and the slough of despond, as John Bunyan says, at certain times spews out its filth, what a state we are in. I fear it was so with me last night, and when I entered my study this morning I seemed, as I may say, lost. At such times, it is my presumption and ignorance in my whole ministry which seems the most deadly point. But blessed be God I was not wholly left, for after a while I began to feel a little softening in the remembrance of Christ's mediation: oh, how I prayed then for faith, and remembered the holy perfection of Christ in all his ministry, which I pleaded with all my heart as my shelter before the Lord—and surely a change followed and has continued till now; some solid though small measure of a staying confidence, and these words and the chapter they are in were sweet to me, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' In this hope, I remembered your letter, and have felt able to reply to it, which I thought yesterday I could not do except I should act as a hypocrite; and I desire to be very thankful that one who has been taught of him as you have been, should have found, by his undeserved kindness, some help through my worthless ministrations; and oh, that it may please the Lord, the good Shepherd, to cause my hope for Hitchin to flourish again! In answer to your very kind way of asking my forgiveness, I desire to ask yours, having I am sure at least equal reason; and if the Lord will bring and allow us to wash his feet so as to prove that our many sins against him are forgiven, what more can we desire? I do indeed hope we may both unite in what you say, boasting excluded by the law of faith, and that every blessing of the covenant may be yours for ever. Pray remember me kindly to your brother, your husband, Mr. L., and the Hitchin friends.

Yours for the Lord's sake, B. G.

LETTER XXXI.

Bengeo, *July* 3, 1853.

. . . I HAVE continued long in a tried and painful state, getting worse in my own feelings; sometimes so bound by temptation and unbelief that I have felt with alarm the chilling of love, and a desire

for solitude, too much like the shunning of the light. I hope I may be thankful that I am not altogether left in this pit of corruption. I found a little breaking yesterday morning from the parable of the good Samaritan; but this morning again finding a full return of the evil I judged all hope was gone, when a ray of hope entered from that same parable, which brought with it a tender love for the tried children of God; and I began to pray for them, and believed that the Lord helped my infirmity. So I preached from the words, 'A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine,' &c. I hope the Lord really favoured us as we were gathered round his table, and some felt a sweet refreshing. Again, this evening, I think the pleading of Christ's name, when all else was gone, helped me, and I found liberty in preaching from the words, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity,' i. e. he can do so, and no one else can. It is my desire to write you this line in true love, if the Lord so enable me, and to beg you to pray that the Lord may reconcile us to his holy will, where it deeply crosses our own, and show us that he has done all things well, even for us. Do not return me evil for evil, but write and let me hear how you are.

B. G.

LETTER XXXII.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 13, 1855.

. . . Dear Mrs. P. has given us a sweet though checkered account of the Lord's dealings with you; from which it is plain that he has not forsaken you; and I believe this is made plain to you by faith. How suitable that word is, 'Lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth!' but we must wait upon the Lord continually, that he would be pleased to give more and more faith. It is a certain golden grace, the fruit and issue of Christ's mediation, the work of his holy Spirit, which is the free gift of God, which is not the reward of any merit in us, and we must be stripped and humbled and emptied and impoverished in order to understand its excellent value. It was given to Abraham, and therefore he cast his burden upon the Lord and prospered. Has not the Lord enabled us to set our heart on it? 'It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' What will all our trials and disappointments signify, if the Lord enlarge our hearts more and more with his holy faith? I can give you, as you also know, no adequate description of the evil and darkness and hardness of my own heart, but I sometimes say, and said so this day, Is there not a coming and looking to Christ? and this

encouraged me to think again, with some power of spiritual meditation, on the words, 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:' and it is added, 'ye would not.' You and I know too well what that 'would not' means. Yet I trust there is a spirit given to us which greatly longs after this blessed faith—returning, rest, quietness, confidence. What a progressive sweetness there is in these four words!—in repentance, in ceasing from your own works, in patient endurance, in an increasing testimony of the Lord's favour growing out of the seed of faith: in these four things ye shall be saved.

I hope the Lord is increasing our practical love for these things. I desire to pray for you that the Lord would mercifully comfort, and I hope restore you; and may he also increase our mutual love, and enable us to pray for one another. . . . B. G.

LETTER XXXIII.

Maney, Sutton Coldfield, *Jan.* 24, 1856.

I HAVE often thought of you and of your mother during the weeks I have been staying here: and I heard a little of you in a letter, which made me hope that the Lord will one day cause you to believe and to know that he is afflicting you for your good, and will enable you hereafter to praise him with all your heart, for disturbing your rest in this world, that you may seek and find that rest in Christ which will endure for ever. I have several times told you that I believe it was indeed the Lord himself, who shot an arrow of conviction into your heart on that memorable night of which you spoke to me. You saw on that night many things which you have scarcely been able to see since; but in that night you saw that they were true things. Perhaps, since I left Hertford, you have seen some of them again; but perhaps the view of them has been even till now hidden from you, and you have felt a guilty conscience, some degree of fear, yet not been able to find the guilt removed, nor yet the mercy of Jesus Christ revealed in your heart to take the fear away. Perhaps you are still wondering in yourself how all this can be. You feel no better in yourself than you did before. Tell me now, do you feel worse than you were before? You cannot soften your hard heart: you cannot make yourself feel your sins and repent of them, and believe in Jesus Christ to take your sins away. You know you ought to be in earnest, but yet cannot find an earnest heart. Now it is true, though some would consider it strange, that this is the very way in which the Lord teaches us by degrees that we are poor lost sinners in ourselves, who never would either be good or do good, if it were not for his rich mercy and kindness for Christ's sake. I say to you, if you still feel all that deadness and darkness of heart, which you have several times confessed to me, that the scriptures hold out this hope to you, 'Wait on the Lord.' Your own corrupt heart and wicked nature

cannot wait on the Lord, and you feel it cannot and will not. This troubles you. It is enough to trouble you. It is because this evil is so bad, that you need Christ to come and save you. The praying and waiting upon him to come and save you, seems to you as if it could be no use, for your heart still continues very bad, very hard, very unbelieving, very dark and unfeeling. It seems then that you are a sick man in your soul, a sinful man, one full of sin; well then Jesus Christ says to you in his word, 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Matt. ix. 12, 13).

Now if while you continue troubled because of your hard and dark heart, and are praying, though you cannot pray well because of your unbelief, Christ have mercy upon me: I say, if in the midst of this Christ should answer you, and come to you by his holy Spirit to show you his mercy, then you will feel as Matthew himself felt when he was sitting at the receipt of custom and Jesus said to him, 'Follow me.' Then you will love Jesus, and be very glad to follow him. Now this is what you must pray for, as it says, Hosea vi. 3, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.'

I remain your faithful friend, B. G.

LETTER XXXIV.

Maney, *Feb.* 22, 1856.

I THANK you for your letter, and for enclosing to me the one from your aunt. You are both of you in much affliction, and I hope you may both of you be said to be 'faint, yet pursuing.' Respecting yourself I may say, it is no strange thing, that after the great joys and glories which were granted you in your late sickness, you should now be called upon to gird on the Lord's armour, and to fight. It is the Lord's wise dispensation, yet one which is very hard to bear. I believe we may say that the principal reason of it is even to keep us from the very sin which you have been warned against, in words from the 62nd Psalm, 'Become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' None except those only who have a spiritual understanding really feel the sin of robbing God of his glory, by secret self-righteousness and having a good opinion of our hearts or our works. Others do not at all see this sin in its scarlet dye; they do not feel that by it they steal the royal crown of Christ's mercy, and become vain by putting it on themselves. Lest his people should do this, the Lord, after richly comforting them, often brings them into deeper trouble for a time. It is not likely that they should be in less danger of the sin of spiritual pride than the apostle Paul, who has said of himself, 'Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.' And you also in your present

trials are made very weak, and have to run to Christ to keep you from the least sin. This is quite as it should be; the grace of God enabling you to abhor the sin, but Christ's power and kindness only delivering you from what you abhor. May the Lord most mercifully teach you, and us also, this way of life every day to our lives' end. As for your aunt, it is a blessing to her that the Lord causes her heart to mourn after him, for this is the prelude to Christ's promise, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' I am also glad to hear that there appears to be a spiritual tenderness and simplicity in the heart of your cousin. Who could have thought, considering his state of mind at the gold diggings in Australia, that ever he should have had a desire put into him to dig for golden faith! Let me entreat him to ask for an earnest heart from the Lord for Christ's sake, to pray for spiritual understanding; 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.' As yet, he hardly knows the excellency of that spiritual gold; if the Lord will mercifully show it to him, he will gladly forsake the hopes of a vain world, for this hidden treasure. Let him remember what he saw and felt for a short time that first night when his soul awakened. The sight of those things in a great measure passed from him, nevertheless those things were true, and one day he will feel them so again. May the Lord have mercy upon him.

I have been here for a long time. I fear some at Hertford may be thinking I have too lightly forgotten them, but I believe it is not so. There are here also a poor and needy people, and you must all bear them upon your heart in prayer, that the Lord would in mercy visit them. It has seemed to me as if it pleased God to look upon them in their present humbling trial, so as to open their heart and their ear to hear an humbling gospel, and this has made such an impression upon me, that I dared not be diverted from continuing here hitherto. . . . B. G.

LETTER XXXV.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 1, 1856.

I WILL not let this morning's post leave without a few lines from me to you, which will come to hand on Sunday morning, in time to enable you to greet all the friends you are amongst from us, before you leave Sutton.

I was much interested in your last letter: glad to hear a good account of many you had visited and conversed with. . . . It is the true province of faith to enable us, (though through a bitter conflict,) to accept all trials and humbling or mortifying providences at the hand of the Lord. It is love that prevails to do it: even love strong as death. . . . I pray that the Lord may enable us to 'strive together for the faith of the gospel.' The Lord gave a

precious grace to Epaphras, of whom we read in Col. iv, that he laboured fervently for the church of God in prayers that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. . . . B. G.

LETTER XXXVI.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 4, 1858.

. . . We were glad to read your kind admonitions to J. S.: he deeply stands in need of them, and of the prayers of all those who know the power of temptation. I have for many years felt a hope, and I trust a well-grounded hope, that he is indeed a vessel of mercy; and all such infallibly shall be 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' But the natural ardour and recklessness of his character, and the outward temptations his mode of getting a livelihood exposes him to, convince me that his danger is often inconceivably great.

It was a great comfort to me that he had induced you to go and see our poor friend ——. I believe it was a proof of love both in him and in you. . . . If ever I saw tender spiritual repentance, faith, and love, I have thought I used to see them in that dear man: and why should I give up the hope that they were really in him as long as I see it written, that there was one who having received his substance, went out and spent all, and could not so much as obtain husks, but when he returned back, his Father met him, and there was music and dancing? . . . God forbid, if now he has sovereign mercy on his soul, that we should be like that elder brother, who was angry, and would not go in, till his Father came out and entreated him. . . . It has pleased God, my dear friend, to bestow upon you freely a blessed gift, to know how to encourage troubled souls, while you faithfully warn them. Excuse me then for requesting you to undertake this service. A second visit might prove a wholesome sifting time to one who so deeply needs the divine gift of repentance as that poor prodigal. How I shall value your further remarks on his case, if it shall please God to enable you to form a spiritual judgment upon it. . . . B. G.

LETTER XXXVII.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 9, 1859.

I cannot allow your very kind and welcome letter, of the 17th ult., to remain without acknowledgment. I may truly say I felt it no small favour to read of your friendship towards me, and that you do not forget my ministrations at Hitchin. I have often felt a hope which I do not desire to quench, and yet am afraid to rest upon, that my way there was before the Lord; that I sought not theirs but them, though, as respects many of them, I cannot feel encouraged that my ministry was blest amongst them. I have sometimes thought respecting two or three, which I believe fear God, that had they been favoured to pray more, they would have felt more drawing of

heart towards my ministry. But I desire to leave this matter in the Lord's hands, that it may please him to overrule it, both for my good and for theirs. It is good to be humbled, and shown that all we do is in one sense doing nothing. I hope the Lord is increasing by degrees this holy knowledge in my heart, and that in the love of it. For this I am made to pray daily; and I find no words more suitable to express my desires for myself and the church of Christ, than the words of the Lord's prayer are. 'O be thou, by the clear Spirit of adoption, known to be our heavenly Father. Let us reverence thy name, and delight in thy kingdom and thy will, even as thy saints do in heaven. Supply our need, both for soul and body. Forgive us our sins, perfecting in us love to one another. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For all power and glory belong unto thee.'

I return you many thanks for your kindness to our poor friend; and I quite accord with the view you take of his case. B. G.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Maney, Sutton Coldfield, *May* 29, 1860.

. . . CHRIST says, 'Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father.' You know in the state apartments of kings, there is one room called the king's closet; and only very favoured friends of the sovereign are admitted to an audience there. This morning the above words of Christ made me think of this. When we are really poor and wretched sinners in our own feelings, the gospel says there is a royal closet provided for us. It is the mediator Christ himself. Enter into him, and pray: for he is in the Father, and the Father in him. 'At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.' This greatest of all privileges will surely be given to those who are spiritually outcasts. Christ only tells us to do what he does himself, when he says, 'Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.'

Now I wish you to consider whether that painful feeling which so often has preyed upon your mind, is not permitted to fall upon you, to bring you to this outcast state? That the Lord's distinguishing mercy to you five years ago may have been followed by a puffing up in the flesh is too likely: the same bad effect the apostle Paul also found: but he had a 'thorn in the flesh,' given him to subdue it, and so have you, as I remember once the Lord most graciously showed you, and made you triumph in your infirmity, as a proof of his great love to you. Now do not you forget that, but know that whom he loveth, he loveth to the end (John xiii. 1). It is in the same love he is now going on to show you the miserable state of your soul when you are left desolate, till you fear even to come to his table, which is only spread for such sinners as you are. In this trouble you often feel that your heart becomes as a stone, and the enemy at that time tempts you not to care about it, for all

will be well in the end. You add, 'This I fear is surely that sin of presumption spoken of Psalm xix. 13.' I cannot help replying at once, Surely it is no such thing. Do you mean to say that Christ does not intend to go on saving his people, because while he is doing so, their own bad hearts become as hard and careless as stones? On the contrary, I suppose there is not one ransomed sinner now in glory who does not know that in his time state he was subject to that careless stony heart. . . . B. G.

LETTER XXXIX.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 1, 1860.

. . . You must accept our best thanks, instead of a compliance with your kind invitation at present: but I hope the time will come when not only we shall see you again, but when the present dark clouds, which the Lord has commanded to obscure your outward path, may have melted away. We are no judges at all of what is really best for our highest welfare. You know that Cowper (who, through all the darkness which clouded his own case, must, I believe, have been one of the Lord's afflicted and poor people), speaking of the Lord's dealings with his saints, says,

'Calls for a cloud to darken all their years,
And says, Go, spend them in the vale of tears.'

But then again he says, and that as a man of faith,

'Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break,
In blessings on your head.'

And if the Lord should give us the earnest of this blessing here, though we should have to die in the faith, 'not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off,' we shall nevertheless be truly blessed. In the meantime I need not tell you, for you know it, the Lord calls us to walk by faith not by sight, in a very low, self-denying, humble, cross-accepting spirit. This I am sure neither you nor I can ever do, certainly never do it in love, except by finding Jesus to be the way, i. e. the way in which we must walk if we walk humbly, renouncing ourselves, and embracing the cross. I wish we had a great deal more power to fix our heart continually on God's unspeakable gift. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I am sure it is the sensible entrance of this love, and spiritual faith in it, which can alone reconcile us even to live like Christ, who had nowhere 'to lay his head.' Perhaps the temptation which now besets you, and is indeed at present not joyous but grievous, is to allure you to try to live by faith on a faithless man's promise. But you must cry for faith which will enable you to renounce that bondage to man, and which can and will live on the word proceeding out of the mouth of

God. We are both exceedingly sorry for the trouble —— is in. I return you his letter. He says in it he wishes to find a man who can instruct him, patiently bearing with his perplexities. He will never be satisfied except the Lord, who I believe once showed him he is the God of providence, also reveal himself as the God of grace, and point out to him the man Christ Jesus, as the very one he is seeking to find. May he pray, cry, and wait to find this. B. G.

LETTER XL.

Bengeo, *August*, 1862.

. . . Oh, what a deadly effect we feel, if left to murmur and rebel against the providential dispensations of the Lord! But, blessed be God for the dispensation of his gospel, which teaches us that when polluted with that sin of rebellion, and made wretched by it, we must not abide there one moment, but flee to Christ, and his fountain opened. I feel a great longing and hankering after this faith in my own case; and believe at times that this desire is in me because the seed of that faith is within me. But you know that Peter's little faith looked stout enough till he 'saw the wind boisterous,' and then he would have sunk, had it not been for Christ's hand. So we must all expect to find it, and our mercy consequently will be not to look at our faith, but to look to the Author of it. . . . Last Sunday I preached a funeral sermon for Miss S. E. I had read the notes which had been taken down during her illness, consisting only of the deep cries and prayers she uttered in her last days. I felt these deeply. There is a line running quite through them, showing that she was not only made fervent to find mercy, but that she really found it in the clearest manner, and was made most tenderly thankful for it. I felt the case of her widowed sister a blessed one, but this is in some respects made more abundantly clear. I was very anxious to find help from the Lord in handling the case, and I believe I did find it. My text was from the words, 'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not,' &c. I remembered preaching from these words when I was last at Maney; but I think I may say I was more deeply led into the compass and power of them last Sunday. We do indeed see the words beautifully fulfilled in such a case as Miss S. E.'s. To think of it! She lived to upwards of eighty before there was the least outward token of her even desiring to find the way of salvation, and it was not till within a few days of her death that her eyes were fully opened to see that way; yet through the wearisome days and nights of her affliction in her closing years, she was made most deeply in earnest, and felt her blindness and ignorance most keenly. I remember for some months before the end, she used to show an evident satisfaction whenever I quoted the following words to her, though she scarcely said anything, 'The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.' . . . B. G.

LETTER XLI.

Bengeo, *July* 9, 1863.

I HAVE treated you sadly ill in not sooner writing after your most welcome and kind letter, giving an encouraging account of many of the dear friends at Sutton; for whom I feel thankful that it may be said the Lord has held their souls in life. . . . I felt ——'s words very appropriate: he says, 'Let there be a praying to do the Lord's will in these particular matters of soul affairs. I hope the Lord will lead you to do his will and not your own, and all will be well.' I feel the necessity for such considerations in a case like that which relates to Mr. Giles.

As far as I can yet judge there seems a love in the friends towards him, and a love in him to the friends. This I desire to consider as an indication of the Lord's will: but he and they must lay to account that this love will be deeply tried, and 'he that endureth to the end shall be saved.' . . . And I desire to pray that if it be the Lord's will we should go on in this matter, he would mercifully keep us from going back. Dear Mr. Giles, in case he undertake the ministry, must lay his account (and so must we lay ours) to be 'counted as sheep for the slaughter.' I have reason to hope that he is a 'father in Christ;' but there is another thing he must be also, (as he knows, I dare say, better than I do,) viz. he must be a 'babe in Christ.' It is this last qualification that will keep him safe, because a babe will lie still in his father's arms, and be wholly guided by him. When I consider myself, I see I am all unfitness to be a minister to the flock of God which is scattered abroad, but that feeling does make me cry that Christ would be the Teacher, not I. . . .

I should be glad to have the testimony of some one sound in the faith, as to the character of Mr. Giles's preaching. Does he encourage the lambs? and does he beat down the pretensions of those whom Hart calls 'old and foolish kings?' Does he hold the doctrines of grace in an humbled heart, considering it a most blessed favour and privilege to have faith given us to embrace them in the love thereof? I have no reason at all to suspect otherwise, but desire if the Lord will bless us, that we do not say a confederacy, and then find cause to withdraw. . . .

B. G.

LETTER XLII.

Oct. 19, 1863.

I DESIRE, if the Lord shall enable me, to refer to that part of your letter which describes your present state of mind. I take notice of what you say in the first line, which I do not think is without significance, 'It has been laid upon my mind to write to you.' If so, I do most earnestly desire that I may not answer you in my own words, but be directed in writing by that good Shepherd who will leave ninety-nine in the wilderness to go after a poor lost sheep, such as I believe you are yourself.

I am sorry that the reading of my little memoirs grieved you, but if, as I hope, grace will enable you to sorrow after a godly sort, we shall one day be the more glad. Now that your soul is cast down within you, do not write bitter things against yourself, lest the enemy should take advantage of your so doing against you. I allude to your saying, 'Those favoured saints found more food in an hour, than I have in fourteen years.' This, if you reflect a little, you will allow to be an over-statement. When Mrs. Judd went on for years, supported only by the word, 'They who seek shall find,' she did not appear to gain much in an hour. When Mr. Dore, long after first mercy received, was swallowed up in despair for ten months, he did not appear to gain much in an hour. I know when the Lord's hour was come they both found enough in one twinkling of an eye: as we read in John vi, that when Jesus entered into the ship, immediately it was at the land whither they went. What do you think David must have felt, when, after Samuel had anointed him king, he was hunted by Saul like a partridge on the mountains, for many years, till all his patience and self-wrought faith were worn out, and he said, There is nothing better for me than to flee into the land of the Philistines? When the Lord first looked upon you and awakened you, you became a little child: and he put you to school; and our school time with the Lord sometimes lasts threescore years and ten. One of the hardest and most profitable lessons he teaches us is, to wait. Waiting on the Lord is a vigorous exercise of faith. It is by waiting that faith becomes strong. The flowers of faith blossom in the day of prosperity and sunshine; but the roots of faith become strong in the long night of adversity. This is as the Lord hath said (Hos. xiv. 5), Israel 'shall grow as the lily,' which is a small flower; 'and cast forth his roots as Lebanon,' which are deep and strong. While your eyes are holden so as to make you suppose that other Christians can get more in an hour than you in fourteen years, it discourages you: but one grain more of Christ's divine and incomparable faith put into your soul, will lead you to a hope that you will gain more solid good by the Lord's slow but sure teaching, than by an untried progress, however rapid: as Hart says,

'Sometimes we seem to gain,
Great lengths of ground by day;
But find, alas! when night comes on,
We quite mistook the way.'

In all this I hope that you and I and all who are seeking the Lord will be made to feel and know, that our one object must be to look to Christ; and when this is found, to live on Christ, and enjoy Christ. If God in sovereign mercy fill us with Christ, he will empty us of self. It is this emptying which is so trying, so painful, so lingering. But we are not saved by being emptied, but by Christ coming into our empty vessels and filling them. It was needful that the disciples should both toil and row, with a wind contrary,

and in the dark night: but they were not saved by toiling and rowing in the darkness, but by Christ only. Peter, knowing all this very well, was strong enough to walk on the water: but because Christ was merciful to him, he brought this strong faith to nothing; and when it was all gone he saved him, and asked him why he should ever have doubted, seeing he had little faith. I hope the Lord will do the same to all his people now entangled in the errors of the Plymouth Brethren, and show them how scripturally true is Hart's definition of faith, calling it,

> 'A weakening, emptying grace,
> That makes us strong and full:
> False faith, though stout and full in face,
> Weakens and starves the soul.'

I believe indeed that were we delivered from the indwelling of sin when the grace of God renews our hearts, we should need none of this weakening and emptying; but the body of sin and death abides in us as long as we live, and therefore the weakening and emptying must go on: lest, as it is written, we should settle upon our lees, and not remember that the Lord pronounces a 'Woe' upon them that are at ease in Zion. (Amos vi. 1.) Still the good of all the weakening and emptying is only that Christ may come to us. Can you and I always welcome his coming? Sometimes he comes with a scourge of small cords; sometimes he comes with a heavy cross; sometimes he comes in a thick cloud. But one grain of his blessed gift of faith will show us, even then, that he comes in unchangeable love, and says, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' I hope the Lord will graciously look upon you in your afflictions, and say, I am touched with the feeling of all thine infirmities. B. G.

LETTER XLIII.

March 7, 1864.

. . . I MUST now, as you desire me, revert to the personal part of your letter: in doing which I begin by saying that I am very glad you have attained, even though only to 'a glimpse of that life of faith' you write your letter to commend. I perfectly agree with that view of it which I may say underlies your letter. At least if I understand it aright, as I believe and hope I do. Still, but I hope not captiously, I find fault with some of your statements, as appearing to me at variance with the very principle you commend. Perhaps you will be better able to judge whether I have ground for thus finding fault, if, following your statements as I now do, with your letter lying before me, I subjoin a few observations upon them consecutively.

You say, what is most true, that 'the gates of hell will strive against our seeking to enter into rest.' You add, 'While the issue remains doubtful, the truth that the opposition shall not prevail

gives small comfort.' Now I would suggest that instead of 'remains' you should write 'appears;' but then you will further see that it is the province of faith to bring in the greatest comfort from that truth.

Mr. Bourne may well say, 'Nothing short of the Lord's sweet power felt can produce the rest.' But his real and effectual, though hardly perhaps his sweet power, may at times be his voice to his people in darkness and having no light, Trust, and stay upon thy God (Isa. l. 10): not a voice bringing peace from the battle, but bringing strength in the battle. Mr. Bourne's daily experience evidenced this.

No better rule for our walk of faith can be given than this divine rule, 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.' Doubtless the first thing is to believe in Christ as sinners empty of all good, and full of all evil. And the walk is to be the same. So then the second thing also, the third thing, and the last thing is to believe in Christ as sinners empty of all good, and full of all evil. The man who does this, has 'right to the tree of life,' to the blessings of justification, pardon, sanctification, victory over sin, and all the rest. His right to all, not being his faith, but Christ who gives him the faith. If we seek for these blessings as 'grounds for our venturing to believe,' it is too plain that we lay the foundation of hope in works. To believe in Christ, is to disbelieve that there is any good of our own, either in sinful self, or righteous self, or regenerated self, or justified and sanctified self. For all the good in us, is not ours, but Christ's; and that good part is not to advance our credit as being better than before, but to show us that Christ is all in all. Therefore our acknowledging the reality of all the good in us, is to Christ's glory, not ours. And should not this check a great many of your 'Ifs;' by which you too often weaken the wine of your libations?

I do not think that your path in that heavenly way of faith is quite so 'unproved' a one to you as you fear. I think you have been found in it many a time, when you have 'received Christ.' The failure comes when you begin to 'walk in him.' Then reasonings, self-righteousness, the sensible want of some make-weight to make faith current, and an inability to say simply and at once, The Lord hath saved me—come into your heart. Then the issue of the conflict 'remains' doubtful, and faith gives you but little comfort. You have been so pressed that you have been obliged to receive Christ into a heart 'empty, void, and waste;' but to walk in him as you received him, has generally proved too much for you. Surely Hart might have appealed to you more fully and directly than to me (the Lord grant me the more mercy) in his well-known lines,

> 'Remember, O Christian, with heed,
> When sunk under sentence of death,
> How first thou from bondage wast freed;
> Say: was it by works, or by faith?

On Christ thy affections then fixt,
What conjugal truth didst thou vow!
With him was there anything mixt?
Then what wouldst thou mix with him now?'

He would have found fault with that spirit in you which cannot go on so simply as it begins; but represents that life of faith as 'a new thing' to you, a 'glimpse only just seen,' a path 'unproved.'

I hope both you and I may attend always to some of your following words. May we desire, need, and cry for 'tokens of good;' but indeed not as grounds for believing, but in and by believing. I also think with you that Mrs. B.'s confession, 'always sinning and repenting,' was good because honest: but she will feel, as you and I do, that the enjoyment of Christ is something real, and beyond what her confession embodies. I also approve your Birmingham friend's acknowledgment, that the anointing of the Holy Ghost must enable him to take a faith's view of Christ. This shows tenderness, love, and watchfulness, which may the Lord grant us also.

I hope I have not in what I have said swerved from the truth, and that you and I may be enabled to walk in it with joy and peace in believing. . . . I cordially agree with what our late friend said, that when brought into the garden of Gethsemane nothing short of divine power will bring us to say, 'Thy will be done.' If that victory be attained even in a little trial in which the Lord, not our own resolution, has made us submissive, let us praise and magnify his mercy. We join in very kind regards to all whom we know, and

I remain, my dear friend, very affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER XLIV.

Jan. 3, 1865.

. . . With respect to the more personal observations contained in your letter, I hope the little I shall say will be according to truth. The power of spiritual life you say you want, but are not able to attain. I answer, Do nothing to attain it, nor try to get it, except by one thing: cry day and night to Jesus, 'Give it me.' Your struggles for it only get you more deeply into the slough of Despond. You say you want 'the salutary adverse power that withstood Jacob,' to be the same 'bread of adversity' to you as to him, that you may press, &c. I reply, you have that adverse power already, and feel it against you, and it is more than you can sustain. Your illness, your deafness, your spiritual infirmities, and your legal spirit and unbelief are all of them the clouds of darkness which clothe that adverse power. Do not say you want more of them, you have enough. If the pressure of these does not extort a cry, do you think you would cry, were you either more burdened, or left at ease?

I have no doubt that your own fleshly desires and prayers are all of them 'salt which has lost its savour;' and am sure mine are the

ne. Therefore do not let us look at them, nor try to find any
od in them, nor believe that through them 'the door will be
ened obediently,' for the Lord to come in according to his promise.
the Lord day and night to come and break the door open, but
ver wait for yourself obediently to open the door, or you must
in vain. You seem to desire urgent prayer and confession to
our mediators; but Christ is the one mediator of every sinner
confesses day and night that his heart is hard; his prayers
eling; that if he tries to believe, he presumes; if he tries to
the right fear, he despairs. Nothing will do you or me more
than a deep living conviction of the heinous sin of self-
ousness, forcing us all day long to Jesus as bankrupt sinners.
ne in the beautiful letter in which he relates his own conver-
ys, 'If the sinner attempt to do anything to make God love
e Holy Spirit humbles him for that very thing . . . till he
him to be as empty of good as the devil and sin can make
This is all the fitness and preparation for Christ which I
' I know indeed that neither you nor I can bring ourselves
nptiness and poverty; but I would ask of you whether it is
im and desire of your soul to attain it, and whether you
hat you will never be rich in good works without being
made to abide in this emptiness and poverty? May the
you there.

B. G.

LETTER XLV.

July 19, 1866.

y glad to hear that you have profited from my good
ourne's letters. I would say seriously, God forbid that
tter one another. Allow me to refer to your saying
ve I, as your senior brother, know more than you can
uld be wrong in making any such assertion, for I do
believe it. I am sure there are heights and depths
Bourne's letters of which I know so little that my
ed I find to be to confess my ignorance deeply to
ating him by reason of this want in me to become
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but very few like Mr. Bourne, first somewhat severely, compel us to come with him to the judgment seat of Christ, and when we have received sentence, then to behold our Judge become our sin-offering. Many tell us it must be thus with us at some especial time, but few so habitually live in the presence of a heart-searching, sin-avenging God, that something of this judgment and remission is going on all their days. Many would call this a measure of bondage; but if so, how can he break out, as he does almost daily, into unclouded love and liberty? I rather believe myself, that this results from his possessing a larger portion of the holy but humbling fear of God, than by reason of indwelling sin I can find in myself, according to David's most serious words. See Psalm cxxxix. B. G.

LETTER XLVI.

Oct. 25, 1866.

. . . In reviewing the past, I feel confirmed in the hope that the Lord heard my prayer in directing us to a lodging where I was able to learn some particulars of you all, which first warmed my heart to believe that the fear and love of the Lord and of his truth were to be found amongst you. I enter into none of those points wherein I differ from many I have conversed with belonging to your connection, having fully believed that the Lord had a true people amongst them.

What I lay stress on is the ground and reality of the spiritual unity I felt amongst you. In the conversation of yourself and some others, I believe I truly found what I have often looked for in vain amongst modern professors. A very simple and humble desire to be taught of the Lord. An acknowledgment with real feeling that although taught already, fresh and deeper teaching is needed from day to day. A real waiting on the Lord to work his holy work step by step, and day by day, as he sees good. A practical feeling of the truth and necessity of the doctrines of grace. The Lord begins with us, not we with him. Our own efforts after saving faith, or working ourselves up to believe, only engender spurious faith. Spurious faith, though appearing as large or as strong as a mountain, will vanish before one mustard seed of the faith which is born of God. The presence and power of the great God with us leads always to a 'fear and trembling.' Not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the holy reverent fear of which the Lord says, 'I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' The quickened believer throughout his whole life will be more and more led into two different states, resulting from the abiding of the old man, and the creation of the new man, within him. Sometimes it will be this, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?' Sometimes this, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' I believe I may truly say that, small as my attainments are, I am daily longing after the power of these things, and I felt the same in the conversation I had with you and some others amongst you.

By the blessing of the Lord guarding you, you were not carried away by excited feelings to dwell on the unfulfilled prophecies, or any outward points, but to find what you could of the hidden manna, the true bread of the wilderness through which we are all passing. You allowed with Christian candour that it is too much otherwise with many of your own connection in other places, as I fear is the case also in other connections. Pride first enters, and then strife; and where there is quietness it is too often the quietness of death, not the fellowship of love.

I hope I have not exceeded the right measure in making these remarks. I am in no sense your teacher, but when I heard your observations upon the words, 'The morning cometh, and also the night,' I felt how greatly I needed to be taught the same things myself which I heard from you. I wish we may each be rightly sensible of the danger which presses upon us all by 'perils among false brethren:' and of the reality of the divine protection, 'I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst.' It is only in tenderly walking in the fear of God, that we can believe and realize this unseen protection. . . . B. G.

LETTER XLVII.

Eastbourne, *June* 18, 1869.

I RECEIVED yours yesterday, and was much grieved to hear of your afflictions. I sat down to reply by return of post, and wrote one page, when I was obliged to leave off, and this day I begin another letter. I have been mourning over the contents of your letter all day, and have found but little sensible relief; but I felt pressed in spirit to pray for you, and the 20th Psalm became at last in a measure sweet to me. And I truly believe I may say to you, what the church says to Christ in that Psalm, (for 'we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,') 'The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble,' which is even now; and, his name of mercy being his saving gospel, well may we pray that he thereby may defend us. I will not go through with the Psalm, but I trust that the Lord will graciously fulfil it in your heart and in mine.

One remark I will make on your letter, though from the lightness of my present trials compared with the depth of yours, I am not worthy to be regarded as an instructor. It is the spirit of the law in your heart which makes you feel the dispensation as an 'inexorable one.' When the Lord, in his due time, shall enable you to watch one hour with him in Gethsemane, the dispensation will answer to these words, 'The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?' I hope you will be led to pray for me and all the friends as Job did; for by that means the Lord turned his captivity. . . . Your affectionate friend, B. G.

TWENTY-FOUR LETTERS WRITTEN BY BERNARD GILPIN TO A CLERGYMAN.

LETTER I.

Bengeo, *July* 25, 1857.

I BEG to return you my sincere thanks for the kindness with which you have written to one personally a stranger, and also for the friendly invitations given me to your house. I am sure with you that spiritual intercourse is an essential advantage, greatly pressed upon us in the scriptures, and therefore to be highly esteemed. At the same time I am sure that your past intercourse with many characters, as well as your own reflection, will show the great necessity that we proceed with mutual caution, and make it our endeavour beforehand (so the Lord may mercifully enable us through grace) to 'try the spirits whether they are of God.'

When your brother and sister paid us their last kind visit, he said to me just at parting, 'My brother-in-law has passed through great spiritual conflicts of mind.' The hearing of this made me feel a deep interest in your case. . . .

I feel sorry for your present painful position on account of the aboundings of unhumbled professors of religion all round you. I would fain say with the apostle James, 'Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it.' The Lord's work, from the beginning to this day, has been to take for himself a people out of the midst of another people. Even where false religion is rampant, it is often found there are a few simple confused saints, who, though outwardly bound up with the mass, are inwardly separated from them. The Lord sends a minister of his own, gradually to call out these hidden ones: and in the meantime that minister may be deeply tried and humbled (as a greater minister was before him) by the enforcement of these awful words, 'Go, and tell this people, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand.'

The great point, my dear sir, as I hope the Lord has been teaching you, is our own entire and full and deep humbling. Even when self breaks out in the meekest believer on earth, and makes him say scornfully, 'Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?' the Lord will say to him, 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.'

You will, I am sure, perceive that I do not write this letter, either to discourage you, or to prevent our Christian intercourse, which, subject to the fear of God, I do most truly desire, and beg to remain, Yours most sincerely, B. G.

LETTER II.

Bengeo, *Oct.* 22, 1857.

. . . I FEEL grieved for my neglect, because the peculiar kindness of your last demanded an early acknowledgment. I had written in my last I fear too strongly, and though you kindly say, 'It is my settled conviction that your letter is perfectly right and very faithful,' yet I am not sure that I did not exceed the right bound in what I wrote. The Lord's words are a sharp two-edged sword where he says, 'Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.' I assure you I was very much affected with these words in yours, 'I hear these things and preach what I think truth, for the help of such: but I cannot discourse with them. Indeed, I feel my own want of experience more than ever I did elsewhere. I had a goodly number at ——, who took me for granted: but this is not so here.'

Why did I not write the very day I received this, to give you my thoughts upon it? I am afraid, because I do not love my neighbour as myself. But I hope, my dear sir, you are under the teaching hand of the great Shepherd; and have not failed to discern the importance of finding grace to guide you in that very critical position, which the above words quoted from your letter express.

I think it will be well if you and I feel it a mercy to be stripped of all false colours. It will do us no good before the heart-searching God to have had those about us who only 'took us for granted.' When the Lord is pleased to single us out as the lost sheep whom he will go into the mountains to seek and to save, he makes us know that we are ignorant, and cannot save our hearers by our own knowledge. Your right path, in the above painful strait, is simply this, to confess your own sin, and to continue waiting on the Lord. If you can fall, and preach before your hearers, feeling its application, 'Thou art the man,' you will find that God owns that broken and simple confession. It will show your hearers (such as the Lord may bless) that they must be brought low, as well as yourself; and all notions about Wesleyan perfection will fade out of the hearts of such. You remember the words of Toplady, which many admire who do not reach their humbling scope,

> 'Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling,' &c.

I hope the Lord will bless you, and that you will return me good for evil by writing to me. . . . Yours very faithfully, B. G.

LETTER III.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 4, 1857.

YOUR letter deeply engaged my sympathy; and I rejoice in the hope that you have found a divine Teacher, who generally begins by enforcing a hard lesson on his disciples, that is, he teaches them

that they know nothing. When I say you have found him, you will cordially agree to an amendment in my words, even that this divine Teacher has begun to find you. Therein lies your whole and only hope. Is it not astonishing to think of the treacherous deceit of our hearts; as Jeremiah says, 'Who can know it?' For what great things we can all of us say about our sinfulness, ignorance, and unworthiness, yet as soon as the Lord begins to show us these things practically, we lose all hope that he means to save us, and forget the plainest testimonies of his word, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'

I have often been led to consider the 34th of Ezekiel. It is the Lord's word against the shepherds, which seems very awful to you and to me. The Lord says absolutely, 'There is no shepherd;' and because there is none, therefore he says further that he will be the shepherd himself, 'I will seek that which was lost,' &c. I have been distressed because I could find no favourable exception made of a few good under-shepherds at any rate. But at last I was made to see that such of them as are really faithful, are themselves individuals of the poor, lost, scattered, diseased flock, whom the Lord is both searching and seeking out. This has been a comfort to me, and has taught me a little how to speak to the people, not to magnify myself, but to try if I cannot be lower even than they are. I remember once in the year 1834, being then Rector of St. Andrew's, I was very much tried, confused, and afraid; and on Saturday morning I received a very searching and faithful letter from the late Mr. Burrell. I thought, Now I am quite shut up, I dare not open my mouth to-morrow. Soon, however, I began to feel a very little hope, as if the Lord did not confirm my fears, but showed me the way of escape was by falling and confessing. So I wrote a sermon upon these words (for at that time I did not preach extempore), 'Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man.' I think I had never preached with more power and liberty than I did on that day. The next day my poor friend —— (she is yet one of my members) came up to tell me how true my sermon had been, and how she saw indeed that *she was the man*. Now, my word could never have entered her heart, had not I also been the man myself.

I think, and I am not alone in thinking so, for my dear friend Mr. W. Maydwell, to whom I showed your letter, thinks the same, that the very things which now seem to yourself against you, are for you. May you not hope indeed that the Lord removed you from —— to where you now are, as you were formerly moved from school to the University? You must now make a great venture, and 'venture to be nought,' as Hart says, before those wise self-justiciaries who surround you. The Lord grant their spirit of self-saving may be infinitely 'abhorrible' to us both. Do you not remember that in Ezekiel xxxv it is said that Israel, in captivity for sin, was nought before proud Edom; and Edom said, These countries shall be mine; but knew not that 'the Lord was there?' So your

enemies cannot see that the Lord is with you: but I hope you will wait like the husbandman, and have long patience, and see at last what you and I have long seen in the letter, but formerly had no idea what it could mean, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.'

Yours for Christ's sake, B. G.

P. S. I shall be very glad to hear again from you; the sooner the better: and that we may not be troublesome to each other, let us be content with short letters, and never think it necessary to write elaborate ones. May we both look to Christ to do all, and then we shall have Abraham's faith; who was one brought to know this, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.'

LETTER IV.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 20, 1857.

I FEEL exceedingly drawn to write to you for love's sake; and yet am afraid for a very good reason, which I will express by retorting your own words, 'You think me a very different sort of person from what I really am.' In all you say to your own disparagement, I desire to join, making a like confession, and above all in your last words, 'With all my clear views of doctrine, I feel I am really an Arminian in heart.' The Lord further gives you grace to loathe yourself for it. I am praying for the same grace to be given to me; and hope that Jesus Christ will give to you and me the power to put the crown on his head of giving you that gospel self-loathing.

There are two or three touches in your letter which quite entered my heart. This was one: 'I am never happy unless I am in the dust, and am ready to say, "Unclean, unclean."' Another of these touches made me to hope that the Lord was not only blessing your soul as a believer, but blessing you as a minister also. It was this, 'When I am lowest, I get most power amongst them.' By following on through grace, according to this rule, you will one day attain to the highest standard on record of ministerial power: I mean this, 'I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.' The bulk of your hearers are proud self-satisfied Arminians, they know not yet how the Lord will root out, pull down, throw down, and destroy, before he is pleased 'to build and to plant.'

See for your encouragement that great work put into the hands of a little child who could not speak, in the 1st of Jeremiah. It proved a sore conflict to him, he almost sunk under it, as he shows in his 20th chapter, nevertheless the Lord carried him through with

a high hand. The mystery which the world can neither understand nor believe, is that inimitable compound which the Lord makes, and anoints his ministers with. It is fear and courage, weakness and strength, trembling and fortitude; it is being a bruised reed and a defenced brazen wall, both at once. This wonderful anointing you and I shall both have, if the Lord empty our vessels, and we only look by faith to him to fill them again. Here comes in that expression which you tell me you do not quite understand, 'Venture to be nought.' Must you go forth against an armed Goliath with only a pebble in your sling? My prayer for you and myself too, is, that the Lord may make us to increase in thus becoming NOTHING. It is a great venture, because (amongst other reasons) we shall be so greatly despised for it by almost all sorts of persons, professing or profane. And we don't like, at least I don't, to be despised. That is because we are yet something: but the apostle Paul tells us we must not say we are 'something,' for the best of all reasons; viz. because we are 'nothing' (Gal. vi. 3). Why should you be so greatly discouraged because soon after your humblings you feel yourself as proud as ever? You and I ought indeed to be the more deeply humbled on this account, but not discouraged; because God's word tells us we shall find it so. The old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, never gets any better in this world. He is to be mortified, and crucified, and buried, but he will never be improved. This is no Antinomianism, though many an Antinomian may pervert it. The spiritual improvement of it, David teaches us in these words, 'My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.'

I suppose you have seen Romaine's letters, and amongst them one especial letter in which he details the gradual opening of his mind to the gospel in the life of it, his entanglements by the Wesleyan Arminians, and his happy escape from all their snares and bands. I do not know anything in divinity more edifying than that excellent letter is.

When I consider the trials which are before you, as well as before myself, if the Lord condescend to make real use of us in his vineyard, I desire to pray for Mrs. W. as well as for yourself. It pleased God, in the beginning of my trouble, to work even more fully in my dear wife, now in heaven, than in myself. She became indeed a help-meet for me. She did not meddle with matters she knew must be between the Lord and my own soul only: but she found Jacob's staff herself, and often through her means I was favoured to worship, leaning upon it. But the greatest obstacle of all to our progress in the right way, is consulting with flesh and blood. The Lord enable us all to remember the apostle, 'Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.' . . .

I hope we shall pray for one another. B. G.

LETTER V.

Bengeo, *Dec.* 28, 1857.

I WAS glad to hear that you were much better in health when last you wrote to me. I hope before now you are well, and able again to preach. For seeing the Lord has been pleased to break your heart, and make you a poor sinner in your own feelings, I believe also he will speak to you as he spoke to Jeremiah, 'Gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.' Not that I desire, in saying the above, to speak confidently; for the Lord must lead and guide you, and himself make known to you his will respecting you. But this I am assured of, that the Lord prepares his ministers for the battle by making them feel themselves very weak, sinful, needy, and dependent in secret. This bringing low is to abase self in them, as Ralph Erskine says, 'Self in myself I hate.' How can a man understand the scriptures except by this humbling? This way of the Lord appears foolishness indeed to men. It is that foolishness of God which is wiser than men, and that weakness of God which is stronger than men (1 Cor. i. 25).

I think this is very conspicuous in the case of Luther. You know Luther's resolute boldness, and Melancthon's timidity: and in a letter of Luther to Melancthon he accounts for it thus, 'I am much weaker than you in private conflicts, but you are much weaker than I in public. You are all distrust in the public cause, I on the contrary am very confident; knowing it to be the cause of God and Christ, which need not tremble and be abashed. But the case is different with me in my private conflicts, feeling myself a most miserable sinner, and therefore having just reason to look pale and tremble.'

My dear friend: may the Lord grant that you and I may be weak like Luther, that we may also find the secret of the great strength the Lord gave him. As Samson's strength was in his weak hair, so must ours be in that abasing faith which causes us to flee empty to Jesus Christ.

I doubt not your outward difficulties will be great: and do not wonder you should feel the trial you express respecting your Sunday school. If it may be a means of making you the more fervent in prayer, till the Lord make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain, you will one day thank him for bringing you into the trial. In all these trials there is a right way and a wrong way. We must ask as a free favour, that the Lord would show us the right way, and enable us to go in it. The simple thought of this has often encouraged me to pray in particular trials: and, if the Lord delays his answer, we shall one day find he had a good and a kind reason for that delay. . . .

Yours very affectionately, B. G.

LETTER VI.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 10, 1858.

I THANK you much for your kind letter, and exceedingly value your friendship, because it has evidently pleased the Lord to convince you of the reality of your own sin; and Hart says truly in one of his hymns,

'A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Ghost hath made him so.'

Indeed, I feel myself greatly behind you in this hating and loathing of self, so I beg you will no more speak as if my regard for you was on account of my thinking you 'a very holy spiritual man.' I trust the Lord Jesus Christ has taught both of us better than that; and made us look up and aspire to be poor Publicans, and not holy Pharisees: to smite on our breasts, saying, God be merciful! and not, God, I thank thee I am so good! This is one great branch of the Lord's true and saving work in a man's heart. If this be not wrought in us, our religion is cant, our faith fancy. At the risk of displeasing you I must quote your own words, thanking God for his mercy to you a sinner, in bringing you to believe them, 'From that time I have, in my worst times, ever felt that true religion is a divine gift, that every saint was found by Christ when he sought him not, that if we ever come to the true light, it will be by being led when blind, by a way we knew not.' But you seem to wonder that, notwithstanding this, sin abides still; that is, that you find such a 'resting in mere routine religion, and such dreadful unprofitableness &c.' Now the real truth is that in your spiritual self, not your fleshly self, seeing all this evil in you, you will hate it and be humbled for it, and cleave to Christ only because of it; but as to getting rid of it, you will never get rid of it in this world, nor Paul either, 'O wretched (not happy) man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

You have not been able to get a copy of Romaine's letters. I will enclose you a manuscript copy of one he wrote in his old age, which has not been published. If I can get hold of a little pocket edition of his letters, now out of print, I mean to beg your acceptance of it. The one I now send suffices to show how he grew downwards. Does not Hosea say, Israel shall grow (upwards) as the little lily, but 'his roots as Lebanon?'

I feel very thankful that there appear to be tokens that the Lord not only blesses your soul with a holy light which makes darkness manifest, but helps you in your ministry also. Your account of his appearing for you in the matter of your parish school much pleased me. It made me hope that your labour is not in vain; but remember, The husbandman hath long patience till he receive the early and the latter rain. Also your dead prayers, your broken prayers, your dark prayers, just those which are not worth writing down, are the prayers which are caught up into heaven. Now, my dear friend, pray for me that I may be yours in the bond of the gospel. B. G.

LETTER VII.

Bengeo, *April* 6, 1858.

Though I can only write a very few lines to you, and expect soon to hear about my little memoir more particularly, yet I must write out of love to you, as you wish I may, even though I don't owe you a letter. I desire indeed to the utmost that the Lord may keep us both from the flatterer's net. Oh that I may grow with you in the knowledge of Isaiah lxiv. 6! It is terrible that these words should be true of saints; but they are so: 'Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.' It is this, the finding of which has often troubled you, and makes you labour to tell me how true it is. I hope the Lord is teaching us both from this very painful truth, that we must needs come empty and poor and needy to Christ, and find all good from him only; that in our ministry we may find David's beautiful words fulfilled in us, 'My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.'

How I could enter into your feelings after preaching those two sermons, and stirring up enemies of contrary kinds against you. I have felt the same in some especial times; but my dear friend Mr. Bourne used to say, 'Only fear God! do what you do, not merely because you see it right, but because you fear God, and depend on Christ, and let nothing else come in: no human foresight of consequences, or guarding against them; only obey God, fear God, leave all to Christ, look only to Christ.' I don't give you his words, but the spirit of them. You cannot think how weighty and true I have found his advice, and how sober the effect was.

Also be very thankful that the Lord enables you most of all to dread your own spirit. Moses is indeed a great example to us. He was the meekest of men, yet when he said, 'Ye rebels,' the Lord took vengeance on his inventions (see Psa. xcix. 6–8). How should we ever be delivered from so great a sin, except we see our danger, and hide ourselves in Christ?

My earnest prayer for you is that the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, may bless you; not only in your own soul, but for the sake of some of his hidden ones, whom at present you discern not. The apostle Paul desires the Colossian church to deliver a short but weighty charge to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.' What exceeding great weight it gives to our spirit to be enabled to believe that the Lord, not man, opens our mouth! May he guide you in every point, and when he brings you into straits where there is no way, may he open a way through the sea for you, as he does very often to this day, though without any outward miracle.

Very affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER VIII.

Bengeo, *April* 7, 1858.

I HAD scarcely sent off my letter written yesterday, before yours arrived together with my MS. I thank you for returning it, and for the kindness with which you remark upon it in your letter. I have never made up my mind to publish it, though I have sometimes thought there are some things which might be useful in it, to those who are favoured with an eye to trace out that straightforward line in which the Lord guides his 'silly sheep,' through all their wanderings, and flinchings, and misleadings; and sometimes also through a state approaching to, nay often really advancing to, a state of mental aberration, as if the earthen vessel was really all but broken by the spiritual treasure poured into it. It is also profitable, though humbling, rather I may say profitable because it is humbling, to show by examples what fools wise men become when they are wandering from Christ; and also that intellectual greatness and insanity are nearer neighbours than we could have wished; and doubtless made so because of our sinfulness.

I also agree in your feeling, that what God has allowed to be matter of fact may be safely recorded. This makes me always feel, that if a man's life be worthy of publication at all, things should be represented in it exactly as they were. . . .

I thank you for putting down the short sketch of the manner in which you were induced to take Orders. All such points, as you refer to, ought to be remembered: the true fear of God will make us reverently to regard the least matter, even as a 'sparrow falling,' in which we may believe his hand may be traced. I was much like you in one point. I remember on a certain day, when I was a child and thought childish things, in consequence of a word which my uncle, the late Professor Farish of Cambridge, spoke to me, I was led to consider, and I think to pray to know, what I should be; and I was surprised at the clear stedfastness with which I was brought to this point, 'I will be a clergyman.' During my second year at Cambridge, I heard a sermon on these words, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' It brought me to such a state of religious feeling, and a sort of humiliation, though scarcely more than a kind of Babel worship after all, that I often look back and think, that though all was without form and void, the Spirit of God moved there. At the time of my ordination I felt nothing worth noticing; you know what your heart is, and such is mine. Then followed a point wherein I differed from you, because (as I take it) I was under clearer instruction in the letter of the truth at the time it happened, than you were when from —— pulpit you would have said, 'I am no better than you, and therefore I must give up preaching.' I was one day preaching in St. Andrew's pulpit, and had such a sense that the gospel was above me and beyond my reach, that I sunk down in my feelings as if I had been a very poor hearer, and

no preacher at all. The feeling seemed to follow, 'I am no better than you, and therefore I must go on preaching.' I have never forgotten that. I have always loved it since. It seemed like a beginning of power to speak God's word. It has always since furnished me with this caution,—Be sure that you are no better than your hearers. Why else did God ordain that sinners should be ministers? Is not this the reason why he rather chooses sinners than angels to preach the gospel? This is the 'foolishness of preaching,' by which God makes foolish the wisdom of this world.

I do thank you for writing to me, and should be sorry that our correspondence should drop. Then allow me to conclude by reminding you that it is your turn to write next. Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER IX.

Bengeo, *April* 27, 1858.

THANK you many times over for your last letter. It was like a cordial to me, and I must tell you so: but the reason why is not in myself, nor in you either, but because of the truth of this word, 'Thy name is as ointment poured forth.' May it please the Lord indeed, that you and I may often find, and grow in that brokenness of heart for sin which you describe; that we may also rejoice in that name of Jesus, which is above every name. Why this is the King's high road to that 'clear view of a personal interest in that blessed One,' which you say with emphasis that at present you have not. I believe it is the only way to it. Smooth and easy professors of religion, who have a very evangelical creed, and a strong notional faith, think there is another way to the kingdom. I do not know what their secret may be; but I desire to say with Jacob whatever it be, 'My soul, come not thou into their secret.' For certainly it is not that secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear him.

The Lord made you feel Psalm xl. 12 so deeply that you cried out under the heavy burden. Why was this? Because he loves you as he loved David; and also because one (and I trust many more) of his poor, scattered, driven sheep were present as hearers; and 'the power of the Lord was present to heal.' May it please him, that you and I may only know one thing in our ministry, even Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and that we may go straight forward, saying and feeling and proving, like John the Baptist, 'He must increase:' but we 'must decrease.' . . .

That the Lord may bless you and your family, and make you an 'iron pillar and brazen walls,' is the prayer, my dear friend, of

Yours very affectionately, B. G.

LETTER X.

Bengeo, *June* 27, 1860.

. . . I HOPE it will please God to enable me to write what he will bless. I wish to do it very simply, if I may; confessing from my

heart that I am obliged to pray every day that Jesus Christ would be pleased to undertake for me. If any one should ask me a reason of the hope that is in me, I hardly know how to reply except by saying, that from the year 1833 and onwards, I have been sensible of a certain touch from the Lord in my spirit, which I can often believe is in a measure deepening to this day. It certainly dissolves my hope in works, even in gracious works; for I see they are only a gift. It has a practical effect upon my ministry, for it makes me pray thus, 'O Lord Jesus come and speak by me, for I know nothing, and can do nothing right:' and many have said that they have felt the word sanctified and made profitable. I have then said, Surely this is the answer to my prayer; and shows that by the Lord's goodness it is the prayer of faith. Thus from time to time I am encouraged to press on.

The account you give me of the increase of your own personal hope, and your hope for Christ's hidden seed in your parish, was very encouraging to me. Also your mention of Mr. K. brought him more fully into my heart than ever before: and made me remember the days when I used to invite Mr. Abbott, Mr. Burrell, and Mr. Bourne, now no more pilgrims on earth, to come and see me and all connected with me in Hertford; and very glad I was, I may say, to sit at their feet. And I want the same instruction still, for I do not find I grow at all wiser, or stronger, or better. But you know that Satan often tempts us, as he tempted Christ, by quoting scripture: so when I hear a voice saying, 'You ought to be a teacher by this time, and not have need that one teach you again the first principles,' &c.; and when I am sensible that that voice only hardens and deadens my heart, then I conclude it is Satan's voice and not the Lord's. . . . B. G.

LETTER XI.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 19, 1861.

I MUST now write a reply to your very kind letter, and thank you for enclosing a copy of your last new year's day address. I approved it well. It becomes a minister well, both deeply to love the people, and to express the love he feels. I certainly do not agree with ——, that it is too Calvinistic. According to my own innermost feelings, which I believe coincide with yours, there is nothing but despair before us, except the grace of God is sovereign, and it pleases him to have mercy upon us: wherefore may God keep me, and you also, from ever departing one hair's breadth from that which we believe to be holy truth, and which is the foundation of our hope. It is not our being made wise to trace out and maintain these truths from scripture, that will do us good; but it is our being made to feel ourselves lost sinners, and so to cling fast to them, that will do us good indeed. This spiritual coming down is the needful point in religion, the part which we all naturally rebel against, whatever doctrines we choose

to advocate: but if this humbling part be not continually carried on, we are woefully misled indeed. Oh, how I felt the truth of this yesterday in preaching from these words, 'Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive!' (Jer. xiii. 15–17.) I saw it so clearly that I needed no one to show it to me, that it is all a pretence to suppose we give the glory to God, till we take all shame to ourselves. It is our being so unutterably bad, that makes his severest judgments so right, and his mercies so unsearchable a depth. We are far enough, all of us, from so completely and fully giving glory to God; it is the church triumphant in Rev. xv. 3, 4, who have learnt that song perfectly. But if in our pride we refuse to hear it, Jeremiah's soul will weep in secret because of the stupendous greatness of that pride.

I do not see why you should be so much troubled. . . . Remember Christ says, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt. x. 34). Our dealing must always be with the Lord himself, as far as ever he will condescend to allow it. He will inwardly teach and inflame our hearts with mingled love and zeal; and when with this unction we preach firmly but tenderly, we shall cause a certain spiritual division. We must leave it to the Lord to make use of that division. He must manage it, and we must not meddle with it. God forbid that we should depart from the humbling truth, in order to heal this division. When the division is grievous to us and wounds us, let us flee to Jesus to heal that grief and wound with his sweet oil and wine; but as for us, he must make us a defenced brazen wall, that though they fight against us they may not overcome us (Jer. i. 18, 19). . . .

I am very glad that you feel a hope that the Lord grants a blessing to your ministry. I hope you will hold that hope fast. You have doubtless oftentimes felt disconsolate and stript of such hopes, even as a greater than you felt, when he said, All day long have I stretched forth my hands in vain. If it please God that in these discouraging seasons you draw nearer to him in confession and self-abasement till you even ravish his heart with one of your eyes (Song iv. 9), these seasons will do you much good. . . . Remember who it is that says, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.' Your only way must be, in this and every other grief, to pray to fall lower and lower before God. See if the Lord will but enable you to make the great venture of which Hart speaks, 'Venture to be nought.' Be not satisfied except in answer to your cry for mercy, the Lord make you willing to bear this yoke of being evil spoken of as long as ever he pleases. In quiet meek-

ness go on preaching, as simply and clearly as possible, Jesus Christ and him crucified, let who will hear or refuse to hear. Do not expect things to get much better in this world, all whose foundations are out of course. Seek for satisfaction not in success, but in the Lord's gracious approbation; and be assured that by so doing you will sooner or later prove that the Lord has need of you, and you will be willing enough then to say, I am but an ass's colt.

I am glad there are particular instances of persons whom you may hope for, among your hearers. You name . . ., and pass on to the account of a young man who now appears in a state of spiritual alarm. Why should you say that, when he came to you, you were unable to give him a word of counsel? If your preaching had awakened him, must not your hope be his also? This must be your counsel to him,

> 'Sick sinner expect
> No balm but Christ's blood:
> Thine own works reject,
> The bad and the good.'

I wish 'James's Anxious Enquirer' said this: but alas! it says no such thing. James, as far as I can judge from his book, was one of those pseudo-Calvinists, who are called moderate, because, though indirectly, they bring in the covenant of works, instead of the Rock, Christ Jesus. Ralph Erskine well says of the whole family of such divines,

> 'The law of works, into repentance, faith, is changed,
> As their Baxterian Bible saith.'

James will be very well pleased that the man should be earnest: and if he be frightened as well as earnest he will be pleased with that too for a time, but will soon begin to reason him out of his fears, insinuating, but by no means openly saying, that his very earnestness should relieve his fears. James will also say, Oh, don't let me deceive you with vain hopes! you must give up all your sins, and not think while you love sin, that you can expect God to answer your prayers. James will gild over this dose of the dreadful law with such a nice covering of gospel words, that the poor unsuspicious weakling will swallow it for gospel, and wonder why it so dreadfully disagrees with his stomach. He will begin to think that his case must be desperate indeed, for good Mr. James's good gospel only makes him worse. For his very malady is that he cannot help loving sin, but good Mr. James assures him that as long as he loves sin he is only a hypocrite, and it is not salvation he is seeking for. What, Mr. James! Have you not yet found out that, notwithstanding all your religion, the flesh that dwelleth in you loves sin to this day, and that that is yourself loving it, for which you must abhor yourself, and be preserved from that love of sin by grace as independent of yourself as the wind of heaven is? That your hope, if it be a good hope, must be in God, and not in yourself, that he will be faithful to his covenant with Christ, and save you, though you are

as treacherous as a rebel can be, and continue so as long as you live, even till the body of sin be destroyed out of you? That the Lord's gift of true repentance will come whenever he touches your heart with the sense of mercy, and makes you loathe yourself indeed for all your abominations? All this is not Antinomianism; it is the death of Antinomianism.

Tell me, if you can, into what state James brings his Anxious Enquirer at last. He does not bring him to any establishment of soul. He does not lead him on patiently waiting or quietly hoping till Christ is formed in his heart, the hope of glory. He says absolutely nothing about the spiritual and divine manifestation of Christ in the heart. The Anxious Enquirer is left, at last, to hope, that having been anxious long enough, he may be permitted to account himself as an established believer. That when his religion has become a fixed principle, he will be no longer in danger of falling away.

I know that in detached passages, especially in the early part of the book, Mr. James says many things very good; and I was surprised to find lately, in the Religious Tract Society's edition of his work, one sentence which did not appear in the first edition, and which might have been supposed to have dropped from Dr. Owen's pen. But read a little farther than these passages, and you will find that indirectly he denies them all; his gospel being 'yea and nay,' not 'yea and Amen.' I hope the Lord will enable you and me fully to believe, and therefore to testify to anxious enquirers, (as David says, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken,') that if their anxiety be of the Lord, it will lead them to keep looking out for Christ to come to them, and that that spiritual coming of Christ will prove to them the light of life. So Bunyan in his Pilgrim represents Hopeful as doing; and at last it came to pass that Christ took notice of him, and revealed himself indeed. So he will always do; for he says, 'Your heart shall live that seek God.' Oh for the gift of heaven-born faith! That will overcome sin, the world, and the devil.

I hope, my dear friend, you will excuse my writing you such an uncouth, rough letter, and believe me to remain,

Yours in Christian love, B. G.

LETTER XII.

Bengeo, *March* 14, 1861.

. . . YOUR letter, my dear friend, was written in a hurry, but it smelt so of the myrrh, aloes, and cassia, we read of in Psalm xlv, that it was quite refreshing to me. I wish I had been one of your hearers on Sunday; the part which most affected me being this, 'Joseph manifested himself to men who were conscience stricken in reference to what they had formerly done to him; and who were getting harder and more erroneous views of his person and intentions

every day, and who never would have found him out had he not discovered himself to them.' May you and I, and those we desire to pray for, be led into the sweet gospel underlying all this, more and more every day. . . . B. G.

LETTER XIII.

Bengeo, *Oct.* 25, 1861.

I WAS yesterday employed in looking over your letter of the 14th inst., which I highly esteem, and have myself been longing for more of that self-abhorring which Christ makes you feel. God grant that neither you nor I may be like ——. The greatest favour he could receive would be, to be made to know the plague of his own heart to be so great that he could not bear his own religion, but would cast it from him as 'filthy rags.' I know I could not please you worse than to praise you, which I do not wish to do; but that light by which you feel yourself 'abhorrible,' is doubtless a blessed gift, and a talent given you to trade with. Its fruit must be, what in a measure it has already been, a coming nearer to John the Baptist's standard, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' I cannot go further into this subject without lamenting to you that this candle of the Lord in your heart, shows me my own exceeding short-coming in that most painful and grievous, yet most blessed grace of self-abhorrency. Therefore I hope that you will pray for me, but above all that I may find the shield of faith drawn over me in these words of Christ's intercession, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

I was meditating on your letter yesterday, and praying that we might be favoured with more of the grace of God, when these words very gently entered my heart, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' I preached from them, thinking of your need, and of my own, and considered the character given in the foregoing verses of the Christians in Smyrna, that they were a poor and afflicted people; spiritually so no doubt; perhaps temporally also. But Christ, who 'was dead, and is alive,' (which is the most comforting consideration to all whose hope has been raised from the dead,) tells them he knows their works, tribulation, and poverty, yet they were rich. Now these riches are undoubtedly 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' They were surrounded by persons, who it appears made a strong claim to be accounted the people of God, but Christ tells us plainly that they belonged to the congregation of Satan. He goes on to testify to his afflicted servants, that they must expect a continuance of the tribulation for a time, though a limited time; but we are continually hoping that this time has already passed; and so begin to make our nest in this world. To cut up all this by the root, he proceeds to say, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

I do not think it is profitable to dwell much on the painful

circumstances of death, we may spend our time better by crying to be strengthened to set the pains of death at nought through Christ's love. But do let us remember, as you express in your letter, the blessedness of death to the believer; for then, and not before, his temptations through indwelling sin and his tribulations will cease.

The Lord says, Be faithful unto death. This faithfulness may be profitably considered in three branches of it. First, Be faithful to the light and convictions of the Spirit on your heart. This will keep out the spirit of this world. Secondly, Be faithful in bearing a full testimony to the truth of the gospel. Be not afraid of testifying to all easy and self-satisfied opposers of sovereign grace, that if the gospel enter their hearts indeed, it will effectually stop their mouths and bring them into the dust. Thirdly, Be full of faith; even of a blessed and tender affiance in Christ, to do all, and to be all. I don't mean that we have power to do this for ourselves, but let us look to that faithful Creator, who in my text says, Be faithful, that he may create in us more faith to the end. Amen.

It came into my mind this morning that I would send you the above little sketch of my sermon last night, because it seems to embrace in a remarkable way the points of your letter.

There is one thing wherein I am often reduced to a stand; and would desire to pray that you and I may please God and not man in it. That is, how we should order our words both in writing and speaking, so as not presumptuously to judge of any man's actual state before God, either approvingly, or the contrary. All the religious world is crying out that Christian charity compels us to acknowledge all sects and parties as right in the main. And you say of —— (who, if he thought you truly felt yourself such a lost sinner as only Christ came to save, would 'stand in doubt of you'), 'He is, I think, a good man.' I do not mean you are bound to say he is not a good man; let the Lord judge: but are you not conscious, as I should be in your place, that by thinking him a good man, you rather quench a light in your own conscience, urging you to say of him with grief, 'I stand in doubt of you?' To say this with serious feeling brings the cross upon us. All men cry out at once, What uncharitable bigotry! There was once a truly good man, Jehoshaphat, who readily got rid of this cross by saying most obligingly to those who were not good, 'I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.' But for this his works were broken, though he himself was saved. I know the weight of this cross upon you makes your parish a furnace to you: but I hope it will please God that you and I, in this and other points, may be 'faithful unto death,' and be enabled to take the apostle John's tion, which some mistaken men would seriously consider a very nian one, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward,' or, as l expresses it, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if it l vain?' . . . Very affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER XIV.

Bengeo, *Dec.* 2, 1861.

Your letter was much esteemed by me and a few friends to whom I showed it. Especially so by Mr. W. Maydwell, who said he had been thinking of writing to tell you how it harmonised with his feelings, particularly where you say that an acquaintance with grief is in your view essential to anything like sympathy with God's own people. He said also that, as for himself, even when he is very happy in the Lord, he finds a weight of grief, partly because of his grievous sinfulness, and partly because his joy is the fruit of Christ's sorrow. I may truly say I felt my own great deficiency in the measure in which I am brought to the same experience, so that I could only reply in secret, O Lord, forgive me, and grant me that Holy Spirit which brings such an unction of 'love and grief,' as Hart well calls it. I hope that you, my dear friend, and Mrs. W. may increasingly feel the same. We hope also that before now it may have pleased God to restore your dear child to her wonted health. But as you say of both your children, they lie (as we also do) in one sense 'at the point of death,' and only Christ can save them or us. I have found, and expect to find, that our crosses spring out of our comforts, as certainly as it is true on the other hand that our comforts spring out of our crosses. The Lord himself when he calls us to 'rest' in him, says also, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;' i. e. learn of me how to bear it. It will be heavy to the flesh, but it is light and easy to the spirit. All these things the Lord, I believe, is in a measure teaching you and Mrs. W., by the exercise both ways which you describe in consequence of your domestic affliction.

I hope the Lord also will enable you to make use of all these exercises, in your ministry: for they are part of the 'hidden manna' wherewith we and our hearers are to be fed. . . .

I remain yours affectionately in Christ, B. G.

LETTER XV.

Bengeo, *Dec.* 13, 1861.

I feel much indebted to you for your letters, and for enclosing the notes of your sermons. . . . I believe what you write in your sermon upon Gen. xli. 52 is true indeed: and as you say, referring to the water of affliction, which was good Micaiah's portion, it did not destroy him, but made him faithful. You add, 'How encouraging is this!' I feel it so; and yet when the affliction first looms, how powerless we become to believe! I think when you preached that sermon you believed it, and were that husbandman that laboured, having first partaken of the fruits (2 Tim. ii. 6). The Lord grant we may both be so.

Would you wish me to suggest a profitable addition to your evening sermon on James i. 5, &c.? not the least in the way of fault-finding;

indeed, most likely, as you spoke you made the addition yourself. The apostle says, 'Ask in faith;' yet truly, as you add, faith is the Lord's gift. But its exercise in prayer mainly consists (you say, as far as you know), in being able to leave the manner of answering the prayer to God. This is well observed, only I think you will agree with me it is not all you know about the exercise of faith in prayer. For faith, this gift of God, this saving gift, what is it but God's power given to us to eye Christ, to lay hold on Christ, to keep our hold on Christ through all sorts of storms, hurricanes, temptations, deaths, so as never to waver in that especial point of asking, believing, hoping, expecting all in Christ's name, for Christ's sake; he seen instead of us; he interceding always for us; he more and more; ourselves less and less; even till he is all, and we are nothing?

When that minister you speak of truly and *ex animo* preaches this faith, then I hope that, laying aside all party feelings, you and he may join together to do all the good you can: till that time arrives your joining with him must only be to pull down all that he builds up. . . .

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XVI.

Bengeo, *July* 18, 1862.

. . . I NEVER intended in our mutual correspondence to touch upon outward points. But we cannot always maintain our intentions, and the Lord's hand for good may be in overthrowing them, for he says, Your ways are not my ways (Isa. lv. 8).

I have already said, that it seems to me that the spirit and signs of the times differ so materially from what they were thirty years ago, that it would be impossible to take for granted that what might have been then right in my case, would be right now in yours. This difference is brought about by God's providence; and his providential leadings, rightly followed, do not go counter to his spiritual leadings. Still, however, his spiritual leadings, if we are his servants, must both be found and followed. All slurring over difficulties lightly which touch the conscience, must through grace be shunned. We must make full proof of our obedience to such a word as this, 'Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.' None can do so who do not prove in themselves what abiding with God means. It does not mean abiding with carnal reasoning, disingenuousness, human applause, or anything of that nature. The first point always is, as Luther grandly teaches us, to find and abide in the justification of our persons through faith alone: and from that refuge and strong tower, to look forth and find how the Lord would have us walk, and bear a faithful testimony before men. Never to journey while the cloud rests upon the tabernacle; never to stand still when the cloud moves on. To pay all spiritual obedience to God's word which says, 'Let thine eyes look right on,

and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.'

If it please God to increase in us both this holy fear and faith, we shall gladly ascribe all the glory to his sovereign grace.

Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XVII.

Bengeo, *Sept.* 26, 1862.

Your kind letter of the 28th ult. has lain by me too long unanswered, but the reading of it has made me long after that sense of the love of Christ, suggested and I believe given to you in meditating on the book of Ruth. There is one point in that account, which is so contrary to our notions of propriety, that one cannot read it without surprise; I allude to Ruth's lying down at the feet of Boaz. But this, I have sometimes felt, is very peculiarly instructive in the spiritual instruction conveyed in it, so that I believe it was even recorded to show us that bold faith is not presumptuous confidence. I do wish I could not endure to go on as I do without being brought to the full answer to this cry, 'Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.'

'Make our union with thee clear:
Perfect love, and cast out fear.'

Boaz was neither surprised nor offended, but fulfilled Ruth's request. So if, through grace, we believe Ephesians v. 32, Christ will do. . . .

B. G.

LETTER XVIII.

Bengeo, *Oct.* 23, 1862.

. . . In looking over Monday's *Record* I fell upon a letter entitled, 'Faith, the gift of God.' This attractive title induced me to begin to read. Presently I thought to myself, Oh, how like my friend's writing! If I can but find out the writer I will inform him that he has a sympathizing friend in the Vicar of ——. But when and indeed before I got to the end of the letter I saw it was needless to take that trouble. I then thought I should prefer writing a few words to you. I hope it will please God to affect the hearts of some in reading that letter; and to make these sweet words more and more precious to you, to me, and to others,

'Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wand'ring from the fold of God.'

But will you excuse my making a few observations on the concluding sentence, which, though I believe to be quite true in the sense you mean it, is so short, that it seems to me (but perhaps I am wrong) to lay you open to the misrepresentation of those who might infer from it that you do not consider the whole man renewed when true religion (i.e. true grace) enters? Your words are, 'It is not the mind

but the affections which receive true religion.' It is quite true that we cannot by searching find out God; but he pours love upon us, which is the source of all love in us towards him. But may it not be said, nevertheless, that the affections and the understanding both receive their part, when grace enters? The affections flow out towards God; and the understanding is spiritually humbled. Thenceforth the understanding sees, and owns, and loves to own, what it refused to own before, viz. that by nature it took a wrong view of everything, and now it is renewed, it cannot pretend to comprehend God, but must abase itself before him, and faith only must bear rule. Then, though not before, it abhors the knowledge which puffeth up: yet, though it thus makes itself nothing, it was never before so truly wise. Thus the affections kindling into life and love, become more conspicuous than before, 'as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold:' but the understanding being abased, and as it were dethroned from its supremacy, becomes less conspicuous than before; and yet the subject of a blessed change, which, however it may seem to abase it, really ennobles it.

Now to pass to a kindred subject. Is it not truly grievous to see the increasing spread of infidelity, under the subtle semblance of devout piety, of which the Bishop of Natal has become the victim?

Has it not sometimes occurred to you, that the manner in which many great and good men contend for a too literal construction of some of the scripture miracles, lays them open to be driven into a corner by the arguments of such infidels? I do not think the sagacious Zulu that made a convert of Dr. Colenso, would have disturbed the faith of a deep thinker of another description, such as the late Hugh Miller. He conclusively shows that the plain narrative of Moses by no means requires us to hold such views of the deluge as to shock our reasoning powers: and I say the same of such miracles as the standing still, and the going back of the sun. I have often wished, if the will of God were so, that some author, as learned and lucid as Paley, might write a popular treatise on this subject, which would in a manner set it beyond dispute. . . . B. G.

LETTER XIX.

Bengeo, *Sept.* 14, 1863.

I HOPE if you and Mrs. W. are to walk through tribulation you will find the blessing described in part of James i, which appeared to me very instructive and encouraging a day or two ago, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Our whole life is a temptation, and so was Christ's before us. Enduring it is abiding under it, as you know the word means. The blessing is not to him that escapes the trial, but to him that endures it. David tells us that the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works is blessed: so he that endures

the trial is blessed. In fact, both these men are one and the same. For that which makes a man endure the trial is, Christ being with him, and his righteousness upon him. Now the most trying and humbling part of this temptation is, the being 'tempted with evil,' such as God cannot be tempted by; neither is he, but Satan, the author of that temptation. It brings our corruption to light, and makes us cry, O wretched men that we are! The issue if we were left to ourselves would be dreadful, for our own lust entices us, lust conceives sin, and sin brings forth death. But, says the apostle, as conscious that the right line here is a line hard to hit, 'Do not err, my beloved brethren.' God is not the author of sin, but he is the Fountain of grace. Look for those good and perfect gifts which he is ever ready to bestow through Christ. Remember if you are enduring the temptation, you are already begotten of his own will by the word of truth, and he knows no shadow of change. Therefore whom he loves he loves to the end, and having begun the work, he will finish it. . . . B. G.

LETTER XX.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 1863.

I THANK you much for your kind letter and its accompaniments. According to your wish I return you the rough copies of your two letters. . . . As you express a wish that I would tell you my own opinion, I may add, that I think the last is the best, and the best adapted for publication. . . . You have in many places condensed without weakening it, and have thrown over the whole a measure of courtesy which makes it the more persuasive. You know, my dear friend, as you tell me yourself, and that too well, the misery and hardness of heart which anger engenders. Then grace will enable you to be always careful, if possible, to keep your readers from being angry; for while they are angry they will not 'listen to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.' Æsop's incomparable fable on the subject will readily suggest itself to your mind; but, above all, we must remember the patience and long-suffering of the Lord. He hates false doctrine infinitely more than we do, but bears with it through all generations; and while he does so, without doubt he fulfils his promise to his elect, 'They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.'

But one of the hardest lessons of patience we must learn is, when we perceive that however we are meekened and made clear in the truth of what we say, persons like —— will misunderstand and pervert what we say, and yet give themselves much credit for candour. He perverts your real meaning in saying as you do, 'It is forgetfulness of the sovereign work of the Holy Ghost, which makes so many exhort their unconverted hearers to give their hearts to God.' But may I ask whether your real meaning would not be clearer, had you expressed yourself thus, 'It is forgetfulness

&c. which makes so many exhort their unconverted hearers, as such, to give their hearts to God?' Certainly Peter exhorted a mixed multitude when he said, 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation,' and you and I continually have to do the same. But I am very well assured that Peter had not the remotest idea of persuading unconverted hearers, *as such*, to recommend themselves to God by doing a good thing. I hope, by God's mercy, that you and I may be as free and fervent as Peter was in commending the gospel to all; only making clear, as Peter did, that the very beginning of the gospel is our entire impotence, and Christ's efficacious grace. . . . Yours, &c., B. G.

LETTER XXI.

Bengeo, *June* 29, 1865.

I FEEL ashamed of myself for not having written much sooner. Indeed, I ought to have written to so kind and sympathizing friend at the time of dear Mr. W. Maydwell's death.

Your last letter I felt not only kind, but instructive. I believe it defines truly the state of backsliding to which all God's Israel are subject in this world. It is as you say, in one sense, 'a very poor and gloomy account' of yourself, and I have no doubt David painfully felt it when he wrote the words, 'My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.' I wish I could truly say that my own state is better; but I fear, so far from this being so, I have a less acute feeling of the badness of it than the notes of your sermon describe. I felt the truth of those notes greatly, and was glad to read of the trouble having driven you to that Man who is a shelter for us; and that a little of the oil and honey of his peace, passing all understanding, refreshed your soul. I love to remember Luther's words to this effect, When the law does its office upon you by condemning you, then is the time for the gospel to come: then flee you to it; and, if you are like me, you will find it very hard to do so. I do not quote his words, but I think I have defined the spirit of them. I thought I enjoyed this on Tuesday evening in the fields alone. It was very refreshing to me to pray for nothing but that the Father would look upon the man of his right hand, and see in him a very good and sufficient reason for visiting all his people with mercy, giving them understanding, delivering them from snares, and leading them into the truth. I also think I found a touch of the same, the evening before at our prayer-meeting. I conducted it myself, and spoke a few words from the Epistle to Smyrna, 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.' I had really been fearing (through temptation as I afterwards believed) that now Mr. Maydwell is gone . . . I should become as barren as a potsherd. But Christ in the above words seemed to say, Fear none of these afflictions: they will do you good, and not harm. It is not the taking away of creature supports that sets the Lord at a distance

from us, but it is our resting in the creature that is the real cause we have to fear.

When I read what you say of the enlivening effect of my letters I felt afraid; and it has kept me from writing for two days. I felt like the man in the Lord's parable who says, A friend out of the way has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. But at last I was compelled to write, and if I should say anything profitable you will know it is not my own work. It just occurs to me to say that last Sunday I was preaching in the morning from these words, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' I dwelt much on the glorious truths of free and perfect justification through faith in Christ alone, which is our acceptance; and asked my hearers whether they did not some of them feel how great the honour of this gift is, and whether they did not love the honour of it? Then I told them what the labouring for it means, as explained by the word the apostle uses to describe it, (as I dare say you have often noticed,) φιλοτιμούμεθα. Is not this very different from labouring like slaves? . . .

Very affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER XXII.

Bengeo, *July* 21, 1866.

I HAVE very often endeavoured to write to you since the receipt of your last, wishing to congratulate you on the merciful escape of your dear children; but feeling greatly dissatisfied with myself and my efforts too, I have as often discarded them. I was yesterday favoured with an earnest spirit of prayer, endeavouring to confess 'my leanness, my leanness.' I found the 13th Psalm throughout the whole of it (multum in parvo) mercifully fitted into my lips: and in the evening was sensibly relieved in preaching from it. I was especially led to notice the combination of darkness and life which abounds in it, so different from the darkness and death which is too often all that I find in myself. I hope in the spirit of love, while I condemn myself, I may caution you. Should we not be very mindful of the danger we are in of forgetting the one great object which ought to be all in all for ourselves and our children too, namely, to 'win Christ, and be found in him?' God's truth, respecting ourselves and our children too, is very humbling, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:' and in our progress through this world, we do but flee from a lion and are met by a bear, or lean on a wall and are bitten by a serpent (Amos v. 19): and the way to solid peace is through divinely-wrought submission. There is a beautiful line in a well-known hymn which describes this well,

> 'When in the solemn hour of death
> I wait thy just decree,' &c.

Will you excuse my saying that the ardency of your natural affections renders it impossible for you to work yourself into a

feigned submission as respects many most dear to you, but I do not suppose it is the least impediment in the way of grace, for we must remember what one of like passions with us found, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me?'

I was very much interested in what you say of ——, and the daughter of your kind friend; and hope they may be enabled, as Wilcox says, 'to see to it that the blood of Christ be at the root of their profession:' but what can I say of the clergyman who, beginning with five hundred and twelve Christians, can convert the world in twelve years! The difficulty I felt on this head, made me afraid of writing before. When we have been, as I have, for some years out of the society of such, we cannot help expressing astonishment at the extravagancy of such errors. I am glad that the apostle Paul testifies that some, whose work shall be burned up, shall be saved, 'yet so as by fire;' and I am thankful I am not called to judge another man's servant. But how can one, who accounts so lightly of the saving work in others, have known that work in himself? I hope he will not be found at last among the blind leaders of the blind. Jesus Christ does not send us to be instructed by such.

I cannot recollect whether I wrote my last just before or after the death of my brother-in-law [the Rev. R. Jeffreys]. If it were before his death I was guilty of a great omission in not writing to you as I promised Mrs. L. I would do. I am thankful to say that I believe indeed his end was peace. Dear broken-hearted sinner, his confession was that of the true church, 'We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen;' to whom Christ replies, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise' (Isa. xxvi. 18, 19).

Yours very affectionately, B. G.

LETTER XXIII.

Bengeo, *Dec.* 21, 1868.

I DESIRE to feel and to express my cordial sympathy with you under the circumstances detailed in your letter. I think there is some ground for hope, when you consider that no strange thing has happened to you. Luther and many more have passed through similar storms, and found that the Lord established their hearts through the trial. If I may venture to speak according to my own impression, especially after cautiously reading your letter a second time, the fault is in your forgetting one short line in Hart's hymn,

'As when a child' &c.

The line I mean is,

'But venture to be nought.'

You cannot direct the course of this whirlwind and storm of error, but remember the word 'hide thyself,' as it stands in Isaiah xxvi. 20.

I was preaching from the words yesterday, and I never entered into the meaning of the word 'hide thyself,' as I did in the vestry before my sermon began. It seemed to say, 'Be nothing, do nothing, but be hidden; for he, and not we, it is who has "his way in the whirlwind and in the storm."' If we 'see at once the whole snare, and set to work to show the nature of it,' have we not Saul's armour on, and have forgotten David's sling and stone? Then no wonder that the evil is rather increased than diminished.

Is there no ground to hope? are there not times when you do hope, that because the Lord loves you, he suffers Satan to sift you as wheat is sifted in a sieve; 'which (says Bishop Cowper) lets all the good slip through, and leaves the refuse behind?' If he loves you, his love will prevail at last. 'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.' 'Be not weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'

I hope you will excuse these few lines, and believe me to be,

Your affectionate friend, B. G.

LETTER XXIV.

Churton Cottage, Pulverbach, *Oct.* 22, 1869.

. . . Now that the Lord begins, though hitherto gently, to lay his hand upon me, my ignorance and short-coming every way threaten to bring me into bondage. But I have cleaved to one word which has in a measure encouraged me. It is Matt. viii. 1–3. The Lord came down from the mountain; the leper going towards it, met him. There was mutual attraction. He was an unclean leper, yet his natural enmity was slain, for he acknowledged and submitted himself to the sovereign will of Christ; 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;' however, through temptation, this power of Christ, in his own particular case, might be disputed. 'And Jesus put forth his hand . . . and immediately his leprosy was cleansed.' I think we may regard that leper as the type of the whole church. I desire over and over again to be, as it were, that leper. His prayer seems to me to contain the marrow of the whole gospel. . . .

One of my sisters, living near, is too evidently sinking; and it was on her account for one reason that I came here. Her state of mind you may judge from an extract I subjoin from the letter she last wrote to me. She says, 'I believe the Lord gives me hope, which is an inestimable gift. That was a precious passage to me, "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." It seemed to say, Hope on: though he tarry, wait for him; for he will surely come, he will not tarry. I am covered with darkness and ignorance, but the word says, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me:" and again, "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended

it not."' The following evening after writing the above she had a very confirming touch as she meditated on Stephen's words, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.' This has still further quickened her to wait on, and this morning I found she had been encouraged further by the words of one of Toplady's hymns:

'Weary sinner, keep thine eyes
On the atoning sacrifice.'

I can easily believe that the true work of God is in the heart of another who gives such evidence of it as my sister does; but I find a great fear in my own case, because of the continual backsliding of my heart from all that is good. I was feeling this to-day, and was relieved in a measure by 2 Chron. vi. 36, at the words, 'far off or near.' I said to myself, This is my case continually,—led captive into a land 'near.' The Bible remains open before me, I consider myself still engaged in praying; but through the lightness of my spirit, I am carried captive, though to a land 'near.' But Solomon's prayer meets the case of such. I then felt, what I always desire to feel, that I must pray at once on the only right footing; as one chosen, redeemed, and renewed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Do not attempt to pray on any other footing, for that is the only footing for acceptable prayer. Suppose (yet God forbid I should suppose) that I am mistaken in accounting that I am one thus favoured, my case will be no worse for my so praying; for I do not pray so presumptuously, but in hope; and as David in the depths says, My hope is in thy word,—so is mine.

I was glad to read your account of the comfort you found when led to meditate on the manhood of Christ. There Christ comes down from the mountain and puts himself in the leper's way. . . .

B. G.

THIRTEEN LETTERS TO A BROTHER-IN-LAW AND SISTER OF THE SAME.

LETTER I.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 3, 1855.

I THINK you both will expect and should expect a few lines from me, in acknowledgment for the very kind letter you sent me. I am glad your visit to Bengeo proved a happy one to you; and I shall be glad also, if opportunity offers, that you should repeat it. I do indeed desire that we may both find the power and blessing of the great word you meditated upon the morning you left, which the reading of Mr. Bourne's happy departure suggested to you, 'The government shall be upon his shoulder.' I do long after more faith and insight into this truth, and to prove continually that I also

am the subject of his government. The full discovery of this by divine faith, is an entrance into the Sabbath of rest which remains for the people of God: but I feel myself very far off, especially I may say during this present week. Yesterday afternoon I was sensibly refreshed by going to see one of my aged hearers (Mrs. Boalter) dying at the age of eighty-nine, after a long and tempest-tossed course. . . .

Will you, my dear sir, permit me, not lightly, to say a word of caution needful not for you only but for me also? Serious and spiritual meditation is indeed necessary, and will be valued by those who are quickened to divine life, as a means of grace: but we cannot be too earnest to be delivered from the mistake very common in this professing age, that alone, by itself, it is a proof that we are in a gracious state. We must watch to see what are its fruits. Is the Lord Jesus revealed with some power in consequence? Can we separate his part from our own? Can we despise our own as nothing, and value his as inestimable, from its effects? The sifting of this matter spoils many a good frame, and leaves our winnowed heap 'a very small deal,' as one of our old divines expresses it. Nay, it often brings fear and trouble instead of hope: and though the legal part of these fears is bad, yet the spiritual part is good, to urge us as shipwrecked mariners to Christ. How low, how little, how bare and empty this spiritual winnowing will certainly bring us! May you and I and many more be well taught to know it, is the prayer of

Yours very truly, B. G.

LETTER II.

Bengeo, *Nov.* 24, 1857.

I WAS very glad to receive your letter. . . . How simple and clear Romaine's three Treatises are: there is not the least degree of yea and nay gospel in them, which is the deep bane of the ordinary preaching now called evangelical. In it we almost invariably find that all the hortatory and awakening parts are based on Arminian principles, though the didactic and explanatory parts are a kind of mongrel Calvinism. The end of all such preaching generally contradicts the beginning. What is it that delivers us from this confusion? It is the doctrines of grace brought home by the Spirit to our hearts, so that we feel we shall perish if they be not preserved whole and undefiled. You see that Romaine felt this; and many others also, as for example old Mr. Vinall. You may see it with great clearness in Dr. Owen. He writes to this effect, 'If you would continue in the faith grounded and settled, endeavour diligently to have the power of the truth abiding in your heart, that we may not contend for notions, but for what we have a practical acquaintance with in our own souls. When the heart is cast into the mould of the doctrine the mind embraceth, when the evidence and the necessity of the truth abideth in us, not the sense of the words in

our heads, but of the things in our hearts, when we have communion with God in the doctrine contended for, then shall we be garrisoned by grace against all assaults.' This sentence is embodied in Phil. iv. 7, 'The peace of God φρουρήσει,' &c. I hope it will please God to grant us this true grace indeed; but without doubt we shall find it only 'through much tribulation.' Also we must 'venture to be nought,' to be accounted fools and weak by many, because we are looking at a thing which they cannot see, not being born again. I mean, The kingdom of God. . . .

Yours, I hope, in the best of bonds, B. G.

LETTER III.

Bengeo, *Jan.* 18, 1858.

. . . I HOPE the Lord's eye and hand will mercifully keep you: you are in a sphere which seems to forebode trouble to one who desires to hearken to the 'still small voice.' I do not mean that such a one is not fitted for a large and laborious sphere: he may be so: but the want of unity which you felt with your incumbent, will, I fear, prove a serious bar to your comfort. Nevertheless, as Mrs. Judd said of herself, so it may be your lot to say also, 'The Lord treated me as we treat children, sending them from school to school that they may be deeper and deeper educated.' Her last school was to a lonely wood, to learn to live by faith, and not by sight. What a great blessing it will be, my dear friend, if you and I are really brought lower and lower till we make Christ indeed to be all. This comes through outward and inward humblings. 'We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves,' &c. What! did self-righteousness work through all the apostle's great labours and the great grace that was in him too, till thus pressed out of him? Yes: and so you and I will find also. I remember I preached from the above words in one of my farewell sermons at St. Andrew's, but I think I could preach with a little further entrance into their depth now. We must learn to endure affliction, but we must not value ourselves for our endurance: we must be yet more and more base in our own eyes, as king David found long before us. This emptying of self is very offensive to those who value themselves for their religion. . . .

Your faithful friend, B. G.

LETTER IV.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 10, 1858.

I HAVE just been writing to your dear brother-in-law. He tells me he is afraid lest I should think him 'a spiritual and holy man;' but I have told him that the exceeding great love I feel for him is

because he is divinely convinced that he is a miserable sinner; and you know Hart well says,

> 'A sinner is a sacred thing,
> The Holy Ghost hath made him so.'

I feel myself far behind your brother in this abhorrence and loathing of self; and it is my prayer for myself and you also that the Lord would lead us by a way that we knew not, so as to bring us through this strait and narrow gate to rejoice in the fulness of Christ. We cannot be too earnest with the Lord that he would never suffer the 'noise of strangers' to drown in our hearts the 'still small voice,' which will bring us down as most helpless and abject sinners, saying with the church in Isaiah's time, 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee. . . . We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.' Then the answer follows, only the Lord, not we, must speak it, 'Thy dead men shall live,' &c. (Isaiah xxvi. 16–19).

I feel it very difficult to reply to some things in your letter. I am so afraid of intruding where the Lord does not call me, afraid of seeing the mote in another rather than the beam in myself. Forgive me and pray for me, and let neither of us be afraid of praying, that while the Lord keeps our souls, he would enable us fully to separate between the wheat and the chaff in our own hearts. Can I be wrong in simply saying that, in your account of the way you found Isaiah lx to enter, there appears to me reason for great caution? I think I may truly say I have sometimes myself felt some scriptures that way, and been made to expect great things would follow, but the Lord has rather come, and has, as it were, pricked a bladder in my heart, and all I thought has come to nothing. I could not see that this was kindness and mercy, but I could see that unawares a wrong spirit had entered and puffed me up; but then I was not able to rid myself of this, nor yet renew in myself a right spirit. I could not undo the mischief, for the sin possessed me, and in a manner the judgment too: and in this state we do not find good to come, for you know, 'the law worketh wrath.' In such a state we are disappointed and fretted, but we know not as yet that this word expresses our state, 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' All these things, and a great variety of them, are detected in the heart, even of those whom God loves: and who, because of his love, are those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose, and who through all these things prove also, 'All things work together for good to them.' The good in such cases as I have just described comes this way: power given to come empty of good to the Lord, as Elihu expresses it, 'I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.'

Now I pray that if I have had a mistaken view of the matter referred to, my words may do no harm, nor separate our hearts.

I especially desire to add, that even should my fears be right, there is no reason why I should not rejoice to believe that as the Lord remembered Noah so will he yet remember you and me both. . . .

Yours with sincere regard, B. G.

LETTER V.

Bengeo, *March* 15, 1858.

. . . I HAD a very acceptable letter from your brother-in-law last Thursday. He says, 'I cannot tell you how very clearly, through mercy, I see the utter vanity of human strength in the matters of divine life. I see it is not only insufficient, but also is not of the right kind to do us any good. Job's question, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" I apply to all our own works. I do not mean the works done by a justified man: these are like Abel's sacrifice, accepted because the person is, and both for Christ's sake.' I think it is matter for much gratitude that the Lord should have opened his eyes, and enabled him to preach according to the above spiritual view. May the Lord bless him abundantly. I must also add the same for his sister, your dear wife, whose letter to Mrs. Gilpin led me to hope that the Lord is taking her in hand. It always seems to me as if there were only one way in which it becomes manifest that the Lord is really taking our case in hand: it is in bringing us lower and lower. It is a great thing to be really emptied of all our vanity and conceit, and pride of knowledge, to become as old Mr. Vinall says, 'poor dust.' We hate this humbling till the Lord brings us to love it. It always comes close, and takes away all that we valued ourselves for: then the idolatrous flesh within us cries out with an old idolator, 'Ye have taken away my gods . . . and what have I more?' Sure I am, my dear friend, that if this work is going on we must needs find Christ to be our sanctification, as well as everything else, to us and to all who receive him; 'τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι, all these things in all these persons:' i. e. our resurrection and our life, our mortifier of sin, and our creator in holiness, causing us to put off the old man, and to put on the new; and that, whether we are Greeks, Jews, or savages, circumcised or uncircumcised, slaves or free men (see Col. iii. 1–8), yet we shall not be content with imputed sanctification either; we shall require the Holy Spirit to sanctify us wholly: but we shall be altogether content with imputed righteousness; we shall want no better title to life and glory than Christ's imputed righteousness, for ever and ever. Oh, the life of these things, not the form and speculation of them! The Lord grant it us.

Yours sincerely, B. G.

LETTER VI.

Bengeo, *Sept.* 24, 1858.

I OUGHT to have written to you sooner. I wish to express a little of what I feel for you and Mrs. S. It seems made clear, that you

have both of you perceived an inward light which will not suffer you to be at rest in the state to which many who are called evangelical reach, but do not pass beyond it: those 'prudent Peters,' as Berridge humorously but yet seriously calls them, who cry 'Spare thyself,' or 'Pity thyself,' because the way of the cross is humbling, and attended with many grievous trials even to the end; and those who walk in it, the Lord in severe but saving mercy will not suffer to walk in pride and self-esteem. I have known a little of it for many years past, and sometimes have enjoyed a quiet heartfelt consolation in it; but hitherto the Lord's way has been thus with me,—after some period of that sweet hope, he has covered me again with darkness, and I have walked through great discouragements: and I feel something of this to be my present state. My longing desire is for more of that holy faith, which I was reading about last night out of Bullinger's Decades (lately published by the Parker Society),—Faith, the gift of God, poured into the soul, a firm persuasion of the Lord's mercy. There is only one true faith, he says, which may be sometimes stronger and sometimes weaker in the same person; but it fights against the unbelief. It is this golden faith alone which can cause us to endure, when trials are so great that as Mr. K. said, 'they will not bear looking at.'

The kindness of both of you towards that poor messenger of Jesus Christ is, I do believe, through Christ's kindness to you. But that sweet spiritual love, which must go on to constrain you both, and me also, is not in our own power nor in our own keeping. If you are like me, you will very often have to mourn because the love waxes cold, or the enemy slily puts in a debased love instead of the holy love, which you will soon begin to find does not bear the same simple, humble, and peaceful fruits. Then there is no remedy except by continual confession and faith, to come as sinners, not as saints, to the Lord Jesus; for his righteousness, not ours, is our justifying righteousness. I think I know a little of what Mr. K. means by wishing to know only Jesus Christ, and God in him. I observed one evening that his strong way of putting it made Mrs. S. ask whether what he said was consistent with a full belief in the Trinity, and Mr. K. said, Yes, it is: and so it truly is. But the love of 'God manifest in the flesh' is precious to a sinner, and intended for his benefit: and I remember Mr. Burrell used often to say, what is very true, 'You will find that those three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are very God, are not jealous of each other. You may magnify Christ as much as you can, and make Christ all in all, but you will never make the Father jealous by so doing: for "the Father loveth the Son" (John v. 20, &c.). So also when we are sensible of the condescending kindness of the Holy Spirit, we may magnify him as God over all, and by so doing we shall not in the least invade the glory either of the Father or of the Son.' . . .

Yours very sincerely, B. G.

me, he drew me out of many waters.' This is no self-wrought and no fancied faith.

Hoping the Lord will bless and direct you, and with kind regards to those we know, Very affectionately yours, B. G.

LETTER IX.

Bengeo, *Feb.* 25, 1859.

I WAS glad to have another letter from you; for I wish always to remember you and Mrs. S., and many whom I have been brought into connection with through you, in prayer continually, that the Lord may enable us all to fight the good fight of faith.

I am sorry I have not heard from —— since a long letter I wrote there before your visit. Though you speak favourably of matters there, and of your dear brother-in-law's spirit; yet I am sure you will excuse my saying, that I long to hear from him something more distinct. I know I have great reason for humiliation because of my own short-comings, but I do desire that, if he and I and you are three ministers of Christ's true gospel, we may give full proof that we follow the apostle Paul's example throughout Philippians iii. I was glad that in your trouble about your ministry, Psalms ix, x, &c. proved a stay. This is the way it pleases God to bless his word; but Jabez's prayer must yet prove the cry of our hearts, 'Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!' . . . I was very much pleased with your account of ——. 'Ah, Mr. S., you never told me into what a state I had got, but the Lord did, and brought me into depths,' &c. You and I must acknowledge with deep humiliation how often we fail to warn others, for want of a deeper and quicker feeling of the snares they are in, from our own experience of the same. These convictions being never quenched, but fully yielded to, must bring us emptier before the Lord Jesus, for God forbid we should look to our experience instead of to him to save us; but our want of experience must be one thing which empties and humbles us before him, that we may need him the more, and never boast. Without this we are not advancing in his school: and if we are not scholars I know full well we are not teachers. . . .

We both unite in very kind regards to Mrs. S. How glad we should both be for a letter from her. Something whispers that she feels much soul trouble, and many days of darkness, and is ready to say, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.' Can she remember that the sands of the wilderness are barren and dry, nevertheless the road to Canaan lies through them all?

Yours very affectionately, B. G.

LETTER X.

Bengeo, *July* 27, 1859.

THE arrival of your letter awakened me to a recollection of my remissness, in having fruitlessly intended to write to you for more

than two months; keeping by me all the while the account you sent me. . . . Such instances show the Lord's mercy: but alas! how in my own case I take notice of them and describe them, and yet not prove or make sure thereby my own calling and election. I hope it will please God to make you and me and Mr. —— to do the last (make sure our own calling and election) most fully. There was an old enemy in my heart before I began to feel any impression of the humbling truth, viz. a disposition to attend to the case of others, and slight the work within. I supposed I had overcome this enemy, but I find it is alive, and as active as ever. This makes me long for a time when the seed of the woman shall bruise this serpent's head within me. The feeling of these things has lately interfered much with my writing: I have neglected to reply not only to the last letter you wrote me, but also to the last your brother-in-law sent me. But may I hope the Lord, in his divine mercy and power, may overcome all the traitors in our hearts. . . .

Yours very sincerely, B. G.

LETTER XI.

Bengeo, *Jan.* 10, 1862.

I THANK you for your letter written from C. just before you were setting off for S. to bring back your family to your new abode. Mrs. Gilpin and I unite in the hope that you may find a blessing indeed, (as Jabez well prayed,) in your new sphere. I was sorry to hear what you informed me of respecting ——. If indeed there should be one grain of spiritual faith given him, where there appears no lack at all of natural and self-wrought faith or zeal either, may 'the Lord be magnified from the border of Israel.' As, however, you ask me if I should have a word of counsel to impart it, let it be that you should entreat the God of all grace, in his divine mercy, to make and keep you stedfast as 'an iron pillar and brazen walls' against the Arminian perversion of the gospel both in letter and spirit. How alone this can be done, you know. By the divine power of the Holy Ghost, making and keeping you what Hart calls a sacred sinner.

> 'A sinner is a sacred thing,
> The Holy Ghost hath made him so.'

Such a sinner cries out with all his heart, If it be not for sovereign grace, I am undone for ever. Such a man, when encouraged by hope sent down from heaven, will preach the gospel tenderly and faithfully: and, as far as ever his influence extends, will preach it 'to every creature' that is under heaven. When the world hears this gospel, all who think they can help themselves will hate it, but the poor in spirit will gladly hear it, and of such must be your hire, whether they be more or fewer. May your arms be made strong by the mighty God of Jacob, for well may you and I say, in the midst of this deceived and deceiving world, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' . . .

Yours very sincerely, B. G.

LETTER XII.

Bengeo, *Oct.* 22, 1864.

I FEEL ashamed of my neglect in not writing sooner, after I heard from your dear brother of the severe trial you have been under. . . . It is a great thing, as I know you feel, to pray through love given unto us 'Thy will be done.' The man is truly happy who finds that favour given him, so to pray indeed. As surely as he prays so, it is the Spirit who helps his infirmities, the prayer must be according to God's will, and underneath him are the everlasting arms. Did you ever consider another consoling truth, that the man who by God's favour can say, in reference to his own salvation, 'Thy will be done,' is thereby proved to be a ransomed child of God? This favour must come from the Lord himself into our hearts. Fleshly efforts to produce that entire resignation, never produced it yet. It is one of those points (of which there are myriads) which we must not work, but only believe. It is not through indolence that we must cease from working: we must cease from working because all our works are worse than none; and having really ceased from all working, the Lord in that very moment gives the faith, even faith in him as justifying 'the ungodly,' which 'faith is counted for righteousness;' and well it may, seeing Christ's righteousness is unto and upon all who thus believe.

I hope by the mercy of God that you and I are favoured to discern at times the marrow and fatness of this gospel of the grace of God. But I must confess I see it more as a thing afar off, than as enjoying the fulness of it, and I am sure that you also groan within yourself, 'waiting for the adoption.' May the Lord mercifully make all your trials and perplexities work together for your good: and may your husband also find the same blessing, and power with all boldness to preach it to others, and have many souls for his hire. When I told your dear brother I wished to write to you, he very kindly seconded me, and said, 'I hope you will be able to write comfortably to her. It is God's gift to enable us to write profitably. Love is a good writer. I find when my heart is touched by the spirit of love I can write freely, and generally with success: but when love is absent, my words are dry and critical. In writing to the afflicted members of Christ, love is truly "the bond of perfectness."' Though he gave me this good counsel, I have not been able to follow it till this morning, but shall be thankful should my letter now prove to you 'a word spoken upon his wheels' (Proverbs xxv. 11. margin). . . . Yours very sincerely, B. G.

LETTER XIII.

Eastbourne, *June* 23, 1869.

YOUR letter, addressed to Bengeo, reached us here, where Mrs. Gilpin and I propose staying until the 2nd proximo, when we hope

to return home. I just mention this that if either of you should write you may know when to address me at Bengeo again.

I wish your letter had informed me when you are likely to leave your present abode, and what your new position will be. My reply to your question would depend much upon my knowing these particulars. But truly, my dear Mrs. S., you know as well as I that no human direction will do for you; all must depend upon the teaching and direction of the Lord. I hope you will both find the comfort of walking 'in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham,' who 'went out, not knowing whither he went;' nevertheless, 'he went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan he came.' There the Lord said to him, To thee and to thy seed will I give this land: and he found great enlargement and liberty, for the Lord said again, 'Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.' Thus I believe Abraham greatly enjoyed that land; and yet 'he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.' Faith can put these things straight, and make us to know the consistency of them all, though sense says they are contradictory.

I hope it will please God to grant to you and Mr. S. the fulfilment of these things, and then such as fear God will cleave to you, and you to them, and you will be able to behold 'how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' This I believe will be the way to solve the difficulty your letter describes. I hope you will find it and rejoice. . . . Very sincerely yours, B. G.

NOTES OF SERMONS.

[Extracts made by Mr. Gilpin from a sermon delivered by him in St. Andrew's Church the Sunday after sending to the Bishop, in December 1834, his resignation of the living.]

2 Corinthians i. 9, 10, 'But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.'

It is already known to some, probably to most of you, that I am afraid this is the last day in which I shall be able to exercise my ministry amongst you in this church. . . .

I have felt that the principles of divine truth, which have been more and more impressed upon me, are very penetrating and very humbling to myself; and that the obtrusion of them upon such as have not the love of them must be even hateful. I have felt a little of what that word means, 'Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope.' And every one of us who are here present, and all others, inheriting as we do a corrupt nature, will, according to the principles of it, love darkness rather than light, because our deeds are evil (John iii. 19). But if we, sensible of this body of death, are enabled continually to pray for the application of God's free mercy, then it shall be that the corrupt nature shall not be the prevailing nature: and not being so, we shall both know the truth and love it, and the truth shall set us free (John viii. 32). That such expressions should offend some, is no wonder: for if we feel them at all to profit they must search and penetrate deeply, as the scripture declares to all who have ears to hear, calling the word of God 'quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.' But there is in the present day an amazing spread of very superficial religion, fair to look upon, but there is no substance in it: it soothes and flatters the mind, and laying to sleep the enmity of the natural heart against God, makes deluded professors to imagine (or act as if they imagined) that the enmity is extinguished, which still abides in all its strength within them, although it may not be roused to action.

Now, brethren, do not mistake me. It is no proof that I or any other individual must be right because what we hold and declare stirs up opposition. Opposition may be stirred up against a man because he is wicked, or vain, or headstrong, or deluded by one

or another of those awful wiles of the devil, by which many even at this day are drawn away after lies and false doctrines. But what I say is this; the existence of the opposition is no proof that we are wrong; for the truth always has excited opposition, and as long as the world continues in its present state, it always will. That which has given some measure of strength and endurance to me has been that in much weakness and many prayers, looking to God and not to man, his word in its fulness and depth has opened increasingly upon me, and I have felt that the things it declares are manifestly true: so that the Bible has seemed to me like a bulwark; and as if God gave me a little power to set forth the substance and unity of that system of eternal truth which pervades the whole of it from beginning to end. So that in reference to this I have often reflected on the word, 'They shall fight against thee (that truth); but they shall not prevail.' . . .

When any overwhelming trial is felt or feared, we naturally look out for comfort; and if at all disposed to religion the word of God immediately presents itself to view. It is easy to talk about 'the encouraging promises,' and so forth. But alas, brethren, it is vain talking, and all supposed consolation is delusive except we shall be enabled to attain to something of the divine application of the promises; and then they are enough and more than enough: the consolation of them cannot be uttered. Though I am far from having attained to the fulness of this blessing, yet I have found something for present support, and discern much more, though as yet afar off. I have been considering the very rich and full experience of the apostle Paul as set forth in the chapter of the text; and believe, if God be gracious to us, we may discern (those who really need it) something of the substantial blessedness it describes.

He writes to the Corinthians, between the period of his first and second visit to their city, in which the Lord had assured him he had 'much people,' as we may see Acts xviii. 9, 10. There the Lord had humbled him, suffering the enemy to sow tares among the wheat; yet wheat there still was as the Lord had himself declared. Having already written to them according to the authority given to him of God, he now, we find, delayed his second visit, that he might at length come to them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. In the meanwhile he himself, while preaching in the city of Ephesus, had been visited with sore tribulation, through the turbulence of unbelieving men. Of these things a full account is given in Acts xix. We there learn that after continuing two and a half years at Ephesus a great storm was raised against him through the interested cupidity of a silversmith named Demetrius, who professed to be animated by a zeal for his national religion, but his real motive was the love of money, as it has pleased God to inform us. This trial was only an outward one, and to such St. Paul had been long inured, and it did not last long, being soon quelled. But the apostle was exposed to great personal risk in it through the blind fury of the mob. The

whole city being filled with confusion, and two of his friends being seized, the multitude rushed into the theatre where Paul would have entered in, but the disciples suffered him not. Nay, certain of the chief of Asia, who were his friends, sent to implore him not to venture there.

Now any trial whether outward or inward, if really sanctified, may prove an eminent blessing. If it humble the heart and lead the sinner to God, it is a spiritual mercy in disguise. So this trial was, as we may discover from the chapter of the text. 'Blessed be God,' says the apostle there, 'even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' Then he proceeds, after declaring his conviction that the trials he meets with were overruled for the good of his Christian converts, to refer to this very trouble which came upon him in Ephesus. 'We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.' It appears then that the trial had left a deep impression upon his mind. Depend upon it, though in itself merely external, it had been attended with much spiritual exercise. He was reduced very low, and made to despair even of life. The overwhelming pressure and profitable issue of it he sets forth in the next words, 'But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.' Here we have his own declaration respecting the state of his mind during that commotion, 'We had the sentence of death in ourselves.'

Now had we been there and witnessed his cool intrepidity when he would have entered unprotected into the midst of the infuriated mob, we might have supposed that the fearless boldness of his spirit was answerable to his outward demeanour. But no. Tranquil he was, but in deep self-abasement. There was no proud elevation, no sense of self-sufficiency, no contempt of his enemies; but he was humbled before God, and felt the sentence of death in himself. Surely the expression is intended to convey an impression that he felt condemned in himself, conscious of his real sinfulness in God's sight, and therefore not daring to justify himself. He saw the wild commotion, which the devil in fact originated, working on the cupidity of Demetrius, but he himself was the ostensible cause of it, since the preaching of the gospel by him had excited it. At such a time there would be no end of the suggestions of that great enemy, to the harassed soul of the believer—'You see the mischief you have caused, and the disgrace brought by you upon the gospel which you professed to reverence: now what good can arise out of all this confusion?' Then, to make matters worse, the whole world, and all its wisdom and religion too, will be of the same opinion, 'What good indeed!

these principles of religion are intolerable.' Now were all these accusations, and all the tribulation accompanying them, to meet upon a man without sin, grief might ensue, but not perplexing fear and confounding self-reproach. Howbeit they fall upon a man whom God has convinced of the sin, the infinite sin of his corrupt nature. He cannot justify himself: he only perceives in that hour, it may be, the workings and motions of sin, not of grace within him. Also the very trial stirs up his evil passions, pride, revenge, contempt of others, and so forth; i. e. he feels these evils alive within him, though they may be so plausibly concealed under the garb of zeal, that an unconverted man in his place would not detect them. He however is convicted of all; and thus made to perceive that the evil within himself is even worse than the evil in the world without. This it is which, when met by the condemnation of the law of God in his conscience, completes the force of this expression, 'We had the sentence of death in ourselves.' And let me further say, that should he not be thus humbled, his state is the worse, not the better, and if grace be given him he will bewail the hardened insensible state of his heart the more. It is a great work to be thus humbled, and thus to receive the sentence of death in ourselves. Unless God work, we sinners shall be puffed up, not brought down, by the opposition we shall meet with. Pride will live, and thrive too, upon anything except the humbling power of God's truth. This David knew, when God brought him, in the day of his adversity, to this most unreserved spirit of resignation. 'The king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him' (2 Sam. xv. 25, 26).

This sentence of death, thus humbling and laying low the sinner, prepares the soul for a high exercise of true faith, i. e. for its saving exercise. For it is by an exercise of faith that any one is enabled to own the righteousness of God, and to feel convinced of his own sin; but this faith stands in the power of God, and will bring the same person to see more consoling things than these. So the apostle proceeds, 'We had the sentence of death in ourselves;' but why was this? 'That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.'

'In God which raiseth the dead;' and therefore delivers those who have in themselves the sentence of death. Some say, How easy it is to believe! I know that it is easy to hold opinions, and to change them at pleasure; but it is not easy to trust in God without trusting in ourselves. Whilst we are secretly propped up in ourselves, and hold the theory of God's grace, it is very easy to suppose that we trust in God. But let that secret prop be taken away, let us but feel a little of our awful state through sin, and then confidence in God, hope against hope, as the expression respecting Abraham is,

will appear a much greater and more difficult matter. Then it may be said to us, as Eliphaz said to Job, 'Now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' To feel the ground and reason there is to fear, and still to trust, this is the work which the Spirit accomplishes in all who are saved, but which no one of us can effect for ourselves. This is living faith.

Now the apostle represents the true confidence as springing out of the true humiliation. If we were left to ourselves, we should not wish for such a fiery trial; but if we be the children of God, let us know that we must expect it. So says David in the 66th Psalm, 'For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.' Now the credit of that tried silver, and the enlargement of that wealthy place, we would all aspire to. But the way to get them, which is through the refiner's furnace, through snares and afflictions, through fire and water, while the proud ride over our heads: this, this is the part we do not approve at all. But I assuredly believe the apostle gets beyond the whole of this in the power of this one expression, 'God which raiseth the dead.' For he does not apply this to the resurrection of the dead body, but to the revival of the soul, which has the sentence of death in itself. Even in this most abject condition, faith breathes, yea, springs up, and lays hold upon the strength of God. I know there is no way whereby this can be spiritually verified, except by the divine application of the very gospel itself to the humbled sinner. 'I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not' (Lam. iii. 55–57). 'And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. . . . And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment' (Zech. iii. 1–4). So the true and divine application of the doctrine of Christ's justifying righteousness covering the sins of his people, will lift up the soul which has the sentence of death in itself, to trust in God which raiseth the dead.

And the apostle in the next clause tells us what the issue of this faith was: 'Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' Wherein it is greatly to be noticed that he describes his course to be one series of deliverances; only to effect this, it must as certainly be one series of conflicts: yet still he is not defeated. This, brethren, though not

a state of rest, is a state attended with much encouragement and many unspeakable blessings. What though outward things fail, and there is much opposition from without and within, yet 'in his favour is life;' and the light of his reconciled countenance, if spiritually though yet but faintly discerned, is a source of present hope, and a pledge of eternal life. If the truth of our acceptance through Christ be made clear by his manifestation, this is the genuine language of the heart, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.'

[SERMON written by Mr. Gilpin and delivered by him in St. Andrew's Church, Good Friday morning, April 17, 1835.]

Zechariah xiii. 1, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.'

THE primary interpretation of this passage and the context as declaring the future restoration and conversion of the Jewish nation, is not that which demands our first and fullest attention, though a point of great interest and importance in itself.

In that day, which is known to the Lord, we are told in the 9th verse of the preceding chapter, the Lord will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. But upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves, he will, on the contrary, pour out the Spirit of grace and of supplications; so that, says the Lord, 'they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' And this we may know, that whenever any are favoured with this manifestation of the Lord's grace to them, the result is a very deep humiliation. Persons complain of the hardness of their hearts, while they continue unblessed with a sense of God's love: let them know that this sense of hardness should urge them to cry for mercy; not to wait till they find a heart of flesh first; they may wait for ever and wait in vain—for God when he effectually stirs up a sinner to seek for mercy, humbles him under a feeling sense of the sin of his heart, and thus obliges him, sensible that he can entertain no hope except in mercy, to look for it. He cannot make himself ready and fit to receive the mercy, he must leave those who think well of themselves to try and do that: his immediate recourse, he feels, must be to the Saviour of sinners alone. But oh, if the Lord look on him with mercy, and enable him to realize the hope of pardon, then indeed will his hard heart melt, and he will understand what godly sorrow is! The prophecy of Zechariah teaches what I have now said, for no sooner are these Israelites represented as looking on the Lord whom they have pierced, than it follows 'They shall mourn for him, as one

mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.' A blessed state of conviction indeed, which the prophet declares shall be felt by each individual: for amongst us it too often happens that the mere description which one may give of humility and contrition in himself, may affect and satisfy the mind of another who has no such work in his own heart, so that he may rest contented with a mere approbation of it; but not so among the Israelites spoken of: for the mourning for sin, there it is declared, shall be deep and universal, and of every family apart, yea, and of each individual even to their wives (their most near connections) apart, each beholding with wonder the Saviour's glory and love, and discerning by a strong contrast their own sin and ingratitude. Then it follows in the text, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness,'—to the same on whom the Spirit of grace and supplication has been poured out; to the same who looked upon the Saviour they had pierced; to the same who mourned with a very great mourning;—oh, who can cleanse us now? our sin is too deep to be pardoned; our ingratitude and apostacy too heinous! Then, to these very same persons, shall this fountain for sin and for uncleanness be opened. Mark the expression, 'for sin and for uncleanness:' so that these awakened and humbled sinners find the most timely encouragement, for the fountain, all holy and pure though it be, is not for the holy and righteous, it is for sin and uncleanness alone: therefore they will betake themselves to it.

It is most evident to every spiritual person that the passage sets forth in living characters the work of God's grace upon the heart. The fact of its application to the Jewish nation hereafter to be thus brought to the acknowledgment of Christ, is, as I have said already, most important and interesting in itself; but this must not obscure our view of what the spiritual work is, described in these words, and which also must be accomplished in all our hearts if we be ever saved through the merits of Christ's death; and God, whose gifts and calling are without repentance, has set forth in a figure by his dealings with Israel after the flesh, his dealings with all the spiritual seed of Christ, and heirs of Abraham's faith.

Let us, then, consider this fountain opened; the cause of its being opened; the effect upon those to whom it is opened.

1. This fountain is the blood of Christ's effectual atonement. There is no atonement for sin in the whole world but in Christ's blood alone. The language of every soul seeking salvation may be, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' It is a fact, brethren, that there is such an inherent sense

of sin and the necessity of a propitiation for sin in the natural heart of man, that we find traces of this anxious enquiry among all heathen nations; and hard is the bondage which many among them have served to procure atonement for their sin. But where the light of revelation has come, it would seem as though Satan blinded the eyes of his slaves in another manner, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Now the very truth is that an atonement is altogether neccssary, but it is in the power of no man to furnish one. No man may redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of his soul is precious, so that he must let that alone for ever. Wherefore the scriptural answer to that anxious enquiry, 'Wherewith' &c., is even this, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' But then this must be altogether and only through a Mediator: the sin which cannot be purged with the blood of thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil is exceedingly great; and therefore man ceases from the work of redemption, not because it may be dispensed with, but because it is altogether, yea infinitely, above him.

And we, to whom it has pleased God to reveal redemption through Christ's blood, may well understand this to be the case indeed. For if we conceive of all the glory of all men, and of the world and of all worlds, of the heaven of heavens and of all the hosts thereof, we should have but a faint glimmer of the glory due to God. Yet he who atoned for sin 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' That is to say, he was indeed equal to God, having the same infinite nature in its essential fulness. Yet was he made lower than any man, and accounted a vile slave, and was brought into the dust of death; for he was made a curse and sin too that he might atone for sin. And those whom he saved were those who pierced him. For what was it that pierced Christ—could thorns and nails and spear in the hands of wretched sinners have prevailed against the majesty of God? no, in no degree, but through the awful guilt of those sins which were by a wonderful and free imputation then charged to his account.

But now there is atonement through his blood, and only through his blood. No works, nor tears, nor sacrifices, nor reformations of ours, avail in the least possible degree. 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:' for there never was or can be one sin remitted but through him alone. And surely his work is perfect: the sin which he cancelled by his death never shall be nor can be charged again. The fond invention of man has made out many systems of religion which would suspend the efficacy of Christ's eternal redemption upon our good conduct or acceptance of his mercy: but indeed he redeemed his people, and purchased every effectual blessing for them; he is exalted to give repentance and the remission of sins; the church is already purchased by his

blood, and no one shall take out of his hand those for whom he laid down his life, as his own sheep.

Here is the fountain whence alone salvation can issue; and it is the most important question that we can possibly ask, whether this fountain be opened for us. It must not be a fountain sealed, but a fountain opened. We have all heard a report of the efficacy of this fountain—that millions have found salvation in it. We read it shall be opened to the house of Israel—yea (as it should seem) to a whole generation of them who shall be Israelites indeed; but is it opened to US?

2. Let us enquire into the cause of its being opened. It is opened, says the prophet, 'for sin and for uncleanness.' Now consider, my brethren, we certainly know by report something of this fountain; but it does not therefore follow that we have experienced its healing virtue. So we have by report heard of the sin and uncleanness of our natural hearts; the deep depravity of man in the sight of the holy God; but it does not therefore follow that our minds have become savingly impressed by a view of this depravity in ourselves, so as to flee to this fountain. Here I come to that point, ever needful (such is the deceit of our hearts) to be insisted upon afresh. Verily our Lord has said, Except we repent we shall all perish: also he says, Repent ye, and receive the gospel. And we may strive to be wiser than he is, and explain away this needful repentance, or to get hold of the gospel without it, as many, many in this our awful day are cheated by the devil to believe they have done—but, after all, his word shall stand, though heaven and earth should fail.

The fountain is opened for sin and for uncleanness, and all to whom it is opened must be convinced of the sin and uncleanness in themselves. May God give us grace to look into our own hearts, and let us then deny our deep and total depravity if we dare. Have we a spiritual eye to discern the deep-seated principles of evil which have their stronghold there? Take any one for an example, take selfishness, or pride, hatred, anger, or the like. I say, the subtle workings of any one and every one of these evils in the heart of each of us are infinite. I do not ask what our outward life is, it may be very moral, according to man's standard; but how much even in that case proceeds from selfishness, from a desire of esteem, from a desire of self-approbation, and from self-righteousness—who knows? I venture to say that the man who at first loudly denounces these corrupt motives, may look within, if God grant him grace, and see more of them working and still more, deeper and deeper, till he begin to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am!' He may consider any one action, ever so good in itself, say an act of devotion, and consider the spring of it, and the thoughts it gave rise to in himself, and come at last to this conclusion, that the object of his devotion was verily himself; he was the god of his own idolatry. He may remember, when his will was opposed about some trifle, and he behaved outwardly with great forbearance, that inwardly he felt intolerably proud; his thoughts of

anger were most bitter, so as even to have amounted spiritually to the guilt of murder itself, yet he, blindly admiring his mere show of forbearance, had been rising in his own secret esteem at the very same time. And I am sure, brethren, if we know anything at all of religion, we may discern in the secret chambers of our heart, how we have defied the Lord like Pharoah of old; how we have, when seemingly most reverent, taken his name continually in vain; how we have prayed without a desire, confessed without humility, and praised without the least degree of gratitude. And not the less so, but the more, if we have been highly zealous, or valued ourselves upon our great strictness. Oh the enormities which these cloaks of zeal and strictness suffice to cover! 'With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?' 'Ye are like unto whited sepulchres,' beautiful to look upon, and they that walk over them are not aware of them; but within they are 'full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness.' These charges, my brethren, do not belong to the wilful hypocrite alone; we are amazingly self-deceived; and I know the heart of every one here present, who has received the smallest degree of spiritual light, bears witness to the truth of what I say from real inward experience. There appears reason enough, when we begin to see these things, to exclaim against trusting in our own hearts. Yet verily there must be something more than the mere knowledge of all this inward evil, in order to salvation. For, 'by the law,' says the apostle, 'is the knowledge of sin:' but by the law never was yet salvation from sin. Also, 'when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.' Something further there must be, to subdue sin which the power of the commandment revived; and restore life to the soul which the power of the commandment slew.

Now this must be the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, the salvation which is brought nigh to him who is a very sinner. Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend up into heaven? or descend into the depths of the earth? for 'the word is very nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' These words are foolishness to all who are not deeply convinced of sin. What! do no more than confess and believe in the resurrection! Alas! poor sinner, you cannot do so much. Your works, which you look upon as fruits of faith and so worthy of confidence, are all against you, not for you, if you have never had the secrets of your heart laid open and been brought to wash in that fountain for sin and uncleanness. For you must be brought down from all that pride of heart, and see that you are naked and undone; and when you cry to the Lord for mercy, the mercy of God will show you that as Christ was raised even from the dead, so for his sake

you shall be raised from a worse death by the same Spirit: and this is to believe in the heart that God hath raised him from the dead; and you must ask for that precious faith, you cannot take it; and if you should work the semblance of it or conceit of it in yourself, and then think, This is the faith which God will accept,—pray what is that, but making a Saviour of your faith, not of the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, wretched exchange!

3. But if that fountain be opened! how shall we describe the effects? Behold, O Lord Jesus, thou hast searched me out and known me. Thou art the heart-searching God, thine eyes are as a flame of fire to try the hearts and the reins, as all thy churches know. And the more I was searched, the more cause for humiliation was found. I did indeed perceive that there was a fountain of sin and uncleanness within me. But then I was made capable of discerning the way of a sinner's salvation; that thy blood is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and therefore opened for me. Had it been opened for any other conceivable end, I could never have attained to it: but being brought to feel 'that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' I perceived that I was called upon by thee to wash and be clean. I was tempted to believe that I was too vile for thy mercy, but was made to see through the subtle device of the enemy, who thus belied thine own word, that thou dost seek and save that which is lost.

Now, my brethren, if a sense of these things be wrought in us by God's mercy, what is the subsequent issue? We are made to abide continually in Christ for justification; to seek a renewed sense of the pardon of sin again and again through him alone: and the more this is granted, the more we are humbled. For having the corrupt nature within us, our only peace and refuge is in the shelter of his mighty name continually; and we shall seek for a nearer and fuller sense of his mercy. When our conscience is disturbed with fear and guilt, this is the way in which we shall seek to quiet it, even by deep confession and crying for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And this very humiliation and faith will become the root of every grace of true holiness implanted in the renewed nature. There is no love, no zeal, no patience, no watchfulness, no fidelity, no diligence (I mean none that will bear the light of God's searching) except they spring from this faith which ultimately leads to the sense of God's pardoning mercy in Christ. Seek for this more and more, but seek for it very humbly. I tell you it is a hard attainment. He that would have it, must be brought even to deny himself. There is the false presumption of it, which is easy and ready on every hand to be offered to your acceptance; but the true blessing is deep, and those must dig deep who find it. Now many who hear this, if indeed they believe it, will forthwith be discouraged. Nay, my brethren, not so; for if you are discouraged, it can only be because you perceive something of the opposition against you. Something says, Oh, I cannot give up the world, nor endure the cross, despising the

shame. I say it is well if you think so, for you think truly. Now then in the sense of that impotency in yourself, your whole strength will lie, if only with it you cry to the Lord, saying continually, Lord save, or I perish.

Allow me, my brethren, to address one parting word to such amongst you as may intend to approach the Lord's table on the coming Sabbath. God is not mocked. Do you know anything, by real feeling, of that sin and uncleanness, which urges you to the fountain, or not? Or does your heart rebel against it, not believing the report, for that such a religion, teaching such humbling views, has no beauty in it that you should desire it? The Lord enable you to answer according to truth; and so may those come whom the Lord bids: and let not the rest think that therefore the Lord rejects them; but remember that David desired to be a doorkeeper (i. e. to wait at the threshold of God's house), and the publican 'stood afar off,' yet were both brought nigh, and so shall all those who are humbled like them. But come not nigh with proud angry feelings against these humbling truths, lest 'not discerning the Lord's body,' you fall into greater condemnation. It is an awful matter to deal with religion in real earnest—for 'all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.'

The Lord put his fear into our hearts, and humble us before him, who as on this day humbled himself to the dust of death for the salvation of sinners.

[Sermon written by Mr. Gilpin and delivered by him in St. Andrew's Church, May 18, 1835.]

St. John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

Our Lord speaks these words nearly at the conclusion of his discourse with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a great man and a learned man, and yet with all these advantages was held back instead of being advanced by them in the way of true religion. God doubtless touched his heart, and made him to see the truth so far as to induce him to come and submit himself to the instructions of the Lord Jesus; yet he was afraid to come by day, lest his unbelieving countrymen should take notice and despise him for so doing, so he came by night. Our Lord spoke very solemnly to him, declaring that he must make both an outward profession of his faith, and experience a saving and heavenly regeneration if ever he were saved. He goes on to describe very fully the nature of that divine regeneration, the change which must pass on all those who shall be saved, the divine author of which is the Spirit, who acts herein in a most sovereign manner, for we none of us deserve to be the subjects of his grace, nor can we by our own works attain to it: yet to all whom

he thus visits he gives spiritual life, quickening their souls to discern the truth, to feel their lost and helpless condition, and to move them through prayer and all the means of grace to seek for the mercy of God. This mercy of God is nigh to them when they are brought to feel their need of it and their unworthiness of it; they are not then called upon to ascend up into heaven nor to descend into the depths in order to find the way of acceptance; for it is very nigh unto them, even in their heart and their mouth, that is, the word of faith in God's only begotten Son, the Saviour of lost sinners. This also is the view which our Lord proceeds to set before Nicodemus. For, says he, 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'

Now is not this a discovery of infinite grace, and are not these tidings of great joy to the humbled sinner? But not at all so to the carnal heart; for the carnal heart discerns not its guilt, and therefore this rich mercy of God appears mean and of no estimation. I put it to your own selves, brethren, whether it does not seem to you but slight, except as far as you may have felt your sin and your helplessness to attain salvation? The thought of this mercy, the hearing of it, the reading of it, the notional belief in it, are none of them sufficient to turn our hearts from sin to God. We walk, as St. Paul says, 'according to the course of this world,' alive to its pleasures, its pomps, and its honour, but not in heart and sincerity subdued to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, even though we profess to reverence Christ as the only begotten Son of God made man for our salvation, who was humbled, despised and rejected of men to procure for sinners the salvation which we, but merely in our carnal mind and judgment, highly esteem.

But if we be really made to believe in him, we become sensible of our necessity; for we trust in him only as far as we let go our trust in other things. It is easy to trust in Christ with a mere notional faith: it is not easy, but very humbling indeed, to be shown our misery and guilt and danger except through him. From this humiliation we start back; and all the false religion that is in the world is invented to quiet the voice of natural conscience without the necessity of being thus humbled. And this very thing, as it appears to me, shows us the force of our Lord's words in the text, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

Let us endeavour to learn from hence: 1. What this light is. 2. The effect of it on our natural hearts. 3. The right result.

1. This is the light of grace. As our Lord expresses it, he may himself be called the light, 'I am the light of the world;' and his apostle John says, 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.' We have the light of reason, which is in itself a great blessing and advantage, but it is sufficient to teach no one the truth respecting himself, or respecting God. The heathen nations of Greece and Rome abounded in men of great intellectual light, but their views of God and the nature of the soul and the actual state of man were confused. Yet the effect of this light was to puff them up in themselves, and make them more averse than before to the light which could really humble them. When the apostle Paul came amongst them they called him a babbler, because their hearts were hardened in the pride of human knowledge; so that the word by which the Spirit of God denotes the judgment of these proud sages on the doctrine of Christ, is this—'foolishness.'

Many professing Christians, yes, and learned divines, have grievously forgotten and perverted these facts, and strive to make out that the spiritual light of God's truth which is humbling, and the carnal light of human wisdom which is inflating, may agree well, whereas every one who truly receives God's spiritual light, will see how contrary it is to the natural desires and will and wisdom of the flesh.

This would not be the case, if it were not for the depravity of our nature. It may be fairly imagined that Adam before the fall was endued with a most excellent understanding, but it was such as directed him to a true understanding of God, and made him delight in humility; but by his fall into sin the whole human nature became corrupted in its fountain, and in this state of corruption will the true light of grace shining discover us all to be. The very idea of this is revolting to us, and all the wisdom of men is employed to extenuate this corruption, and make it out to be as slight as possible; but the scriptures speak of it in very fearful terms, declaring that all who inherit it are by nature the children of wrath, having a heart which is enmity against God. Now the light of grace must show this, and convince us of our sin: but then we may well consider here also, that the light which makes the discovery is indeed the light of grace; if we shall be convinced of sin and made humble, the same light reveals to us salvation. Indeed it is the prime object of that light to set forth Jesus Christ as the fountain of new life, peace, justification, holiness, God's favour, and eternal glory. He likewise is a covenant head, (as Adam was,) to his whole ransomed and elect church, and as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and death reigned by one; so, by the obedience of one are many made righteous, and grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life. But this infinite and mighty salvation is in Christ alone, and those who are made to lay hold of it, are brought to feel this; that it comes not by chance, but by the will of God; that they cannot merit it, nor yet qualify themselves for it, but being humbled and brought

to feel their necessity, must cry to the Lord, with whom this mercy is, that it may be granted to them. The light of grace will show them what the light of nature will always dispute against, namely, the infinite demerit of sin in itself, and of themselves as sinners loving sin and following it with the whole bent of their depraved will, which has only pursued evil continually since the first fall of man, whatever unscriptural moralists may teach to the contrary, who have yet to learn this lesson in their own case, that their own heart is fully set in them to do evil.

We are obliged to come round to this point continually; for the true nature of Christ and his everlasting salvation can never be otherwise apprehended: and it is because men are not convinced of sin, that the glorious light which reveals the Saviour is so continually scorned and rejected, as we find it to be in all hearts. Some men try to magnify the Saviour who feel not sin, at least not the evil and baseness of sin as defiling themselves, but there is no real honesty of heart in doing so: the Saviour, in fact, cannot be really discerned in his glory, except we be enabled to renounce our own; and this is the controversy God has with men: for that real contrition which is wrought in the renewed heart is not only an outward acknowledgment of sin; that is easy enough; but it is the feeling of it which brings us into the dust before God, and urges us with full purpose of heart to cry for deliverance both from its dominion and from the curse due to it.

2. These considerations will prepare us to observe what the effects of this spiritual light are upon our carnal hearts.

Our Lord is very express, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' It is a very easy matter to apply these words to the Jews of old, but any degree of real knowledge will lead us to apply them to our own selves.

And here I would establish this point by the testimony of scripture. The carnal heart which shuns the light is assuredly in every man, in one no less than another by nature.

This is so clear from scripture that few have the effrontery to deny it, for God there shows that he has concluded all under sin, and we need use no stronger words than he has done to describe this matter. 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one.'

Yet though we read such words as these, and acknowledge the scriptures to be true, we find means to evade their force. Chiefly, the secret stronghold of many is some thought of this kind,—This must be true of men in their natural state, but not true of those who are Christians, regenerate persons. Now there is in this evasion the semblance of truth, therefore we should be particularly on our guard here. For mark how Satan deludes us. Being by nature

ignorant and insensible of the evil of sin, and acknowledging in a confused manner that the grace of God cleanses from sin, many suppose their insensibility and ignorance of the power of sin working within them proceeds from the operation of grace. They feel no mighty temptations, live morally, are easy in mind, it may be devout and zealous too, and hold the theory of gospel truths, wherefore what else do they require?—as they imagine, nothing. Hence they take all the promises for granted as belonging to them, and have much to say about their fulness or sweetness. Others have not so much of the form of godliness, but feel the same easy composure.

Now, my brethren, I say the easy composure of such, results from hence; that they are alive without the law, that the fountains of the great deep of their carnal hearts have never been broken up to them, for the operation of the true grace of God, as described by his own inspiration, is very different from what they feel within. For I feel indeed that the scripture fully maintains that the carnal nature in which all evil principles are inherent is not taken away when the Spirit of God works in sinners, nor are those evil principles themselves taken away, though mortified continually in their actings, and a divine principle which has God's holiness in it, being his perfect work, is implanted. Hence the grace of God is, as the text calls it, LIGHT indeed; it cannot exist without bringing our own evil to light, making it manifest, and it will search it out and detect it where before we never suspected it. Mark you how confidently men walk in the pride of goodness; how they can speak great swelling words of vanity about their faith, their love, their zeal, their sincerity, and what not besides; who never had one real heart pang at the sight and feeling of their sin in all their lives.

Now where grace works, even though through mercy it bring us, as God sees fit, to discern and rejoice in God's work within and to thank him for it, it will always lay and keep us low at the same time. It will show that all which is our own is vanity and evil. It will show us our need, our deep need of mercy, it will stir us up to cry for mercy, it will keep us from resting short of God's application of the mercy; and when the promise of God is fulfilled, when the light of his countenance is discerned, then above all times we shall most discern our unworthiness, and be ashamed, and justify God, and abhor ourselves, and mourn for our sin, and repent in dust and ashes. And I warn every one, not to trust in any profession of religion which brings him not to know and feel these things, for it will surely deceive him in the day of visitation.

But if his religion be of this kind, how sensible will he be of the existence within himself of the darkness which hateth the light—which shuns it because it is too searching and too humbling—I do not say he will therefore love darkness rather than light; by the will of his renewed nature he will love the light, but he will ever feel the conflict, and will overcome in it not by his own strength, but by the strength of God implored and granted.

And if we feel not these things deeply so as to be humbled, the is our religion itself questionable: as to those who are filled wi vain confidence that they are free from such depraved darkness i their carnal will, they prove themselves to be blind indeed as t any spiritual sense of the truth of God.

3. There is then most assuredly in all men and at all perio that which shuns the light, loving darkness rather, and all who a under the influence of grace will know and feel it in themselve but many who are only in darkness and under sin's dominion w not feel this shunning of the light to be their own case, but often co ceive themselves free from such a sin. Now what is the result? L us consider from our Lord's words, 'This is the condemnation,' he say 'that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather.'

We are fond of disguising our sins, for the heart is as deceitful it is wicked, and is never done with its hypocrisy. It is easy excuse our conduct in shunning the light. The fact is, that t effects of the light are very terrible in themselves. To be hu bled indeed, and convinced of sin, and made to cry for mercy, these things are terrible: to find the devil and the world rous against us by many subtle devices, whether by alluring or alar ing us, or by both these, to cause us to fall, these things also a very terrible. Hence we are eager to find out good reasons f escaping these things, and never till at the revelation of Go righteous judgment the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, sh we know the vanity and dishonesty of the means we have employ for this end. Now that which all alike feel, all alike are not ov come by; the grace of God is able to prevail against the power sin, and will prevail according to the will and purpose of G who grants to his people in Christ, for Christ's sake, a spirit mighty faith which overcomes the world, as it is written, 'This is t victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

It behoves us then to distinguish here: Christ's words are, 'T is the condemnation,' that men loving darkness, shun the light; the other hand, if they are brought to receive the truth in the l of it, so as to come to the light, the end is salvation. Whate difficulties we may feel on the subject of man's responsibility, a his obligation to fulfil the law, which by nature he cannot fulfil, t difficulties will be all cleared up one day, when God shall make judgments 'as the light that goeth forth,' clear, pure, and with any darkness. It will be well indeed to be brought to this con tion now, so far as to join in heart with David's confession, 'Beh I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in t sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.' And this I know, that though it be ind a great thing to attain to this spirit in simple and sincere reality, light of grace continuing to shine, and subduing our hearts humiliation and prayer more and more continually, will bring us

it indeed. We shall discern the amazing wickedness and obstinacy and pride of our natural hearts, in refusing to submit to the light which humbles us, even because we exalt ourselves in God's place, and would rather seek our own glory, than learn by the feeling of our iniquity to condemn ourselves and to justify him. And oh, that it may please God in his divine mercy, through Christ, to enable us to feel these things now, that we may escape the extreme condemnation which is the wages of our sin!

Behold, then, what it is that really qualifies us for the deliverance and salvation of the gospel; no work nor merit nor preparation of our own, no condition which it rests with us to fulfil, but the sense and feeling of our guilt urging us to fall low before God, implore him to shew mercy, and to cover our sins by Christ's merits. Thus he works in us, and shows us that the same light of grace which humbles us as sinners, reveals our deliverance and exaltation in Christ, so that we have whereof to glory (though not in ourselves) even in him 'who unto us is made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

From the whole subject before us I would notice one or two special inferences which we shall do well to bear in mind.

If we will follow Christ, we must expect humiliation, and expect conflict. Therefore let us be upon our guard lest we be overcome. God will humble us; and he will effectually humble his people in this world; yet he will graciously and effectually support all those who are brought to deny themselves and to trust in him.

Therefore let us not be discouraged if we feel these things; but rather let them turn to us as a testimony of God's favour. Let us ever look to him the more, the less encouragement we are able to derive from ourselves or other things. Let us look to him, remembering his promises which are made to those who are humble, and conscious of sin, and unable to deliver themselves. Let us acknowledge our iniquity freely, knowing that the blood of Christ is a sufficient atonement for all the guilt that we can feel; and it is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and therefore for them who feel themselves sinful and unclean.

[Extracts made by Mr. Gilpin from a sermon delivered by him in St. Andrew's Church, on the Sunday immediately preceding the Bishop's acceptance of his resignation, in June 1835.]

Psalm li. 6, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.'

From the principles which I have expressed publicly, and which led me to that course of action which issues in this painful termination, I would say, in the fear of God, that I dare not retract. For the consequences, whatever they may be, God has not made me

responsible if only my course has been directed by him: and I know he is able to overrule them all for the spiritual good of his church, and the confusion of Satan's devices.

We live in dangerous times. There is the appearance of the increase of great evils, anarchy and infidelity, the fruits of our pride and presumption. Therefore many exclaim, and exclaim well, Do nothing which may help to encourage these dangerous evils. Yet I would wish all to remember besides that there is another evil amongst us, perhaps worse, because more deceptive than those already mentioned, even the form of godliness, without the power of it; and if the grace of God really teach us what true religion is, we shall indeed feel anxious to do nothing which may help to encourage this great evil. Therefore let us beware of all false professions of religion; of inducing either ourselves or our children, according to our naturally evil hearts, to rest in a state of false peace, and to imagine that we are advancing towards heaven, when in fact we have not learnt the way there. Let us take heed not to look upon the blessings of God's covenant of grace, as dependent on our own free will. Let us take heed that we neither depreciate, nor account of uncertain efficacy the gracious good-will and election of the Father, the precious blood, intercession, and righteousness of the Son, and the almighty influence of the Holy Ghost. Let us take heed that we do not mingle grace and works in the matter of our justification before God, nor represent the faith by which Christ is received into our hearts to salvation, as standing in anything less than the great power of God (1 Cor. ii. 5).

If these things be deeply felt in their reality and importance, the effect will be to humble and bring us low in spirit before the Lord, crying for his saving mercy. We shall not bring our merits in our hands, nor rest in any supposed holiness, nor rest at all, except in the experience of God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and his daily power and direction. And verily all holiness will accompany the power of these things in our hearts: patience, resignation, humility, and affiance towards God; diligence, faithfulness, integrity, and kindness towards man; we shall then seek to know God's will and do it, being contented in our several stations, in subjection to the powers that be, fearing the Lord and the king, and not meddling with them that are given to change (Prov. xxiv. 21).

I know, brethren, that false professors abound, whose erroneous principles and inconsistent walk class them amongst those whose 'sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment.' But many who walk in the form of godliness without the power of it, deceive not only others but themselves. Those, who notwithstanding abundance of outward zeal, or clearness in the definition of doctrines, know and trace nothing of a daily operation of God in the inward man: who seem to think that they have continual love to God and Christ, without being also broken in heart from the feeling discovery of their daily sin: who instead of being subdued in spirit to

cry diligently for the teaching of grace, lightly take for granted that they have it, yet cannot accurately distinguish what the fruits of the teaching are: who instead of being simple as children before God and his word, approach his majesty without awe, and read and reason without fear:—indeed, my brethren, these may be highly esteemed in the sight of men, but the scripture clearly points them out as abomination in the sight of God. 'There is a generation (even that one I have now described) that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness' (Prov. xxx. 12).

And many of these are so very ready at advancing scripture, that they may in some sort be said to take it out of the mouths of God's humbled people, by their own bold and unsound applications of it. They quote the threatenings, and cry out woe upon a wicked world, but the arrow does not shoot their own innermost souls, 'Thou, THOU art the man.' They expatiate on the promises and God's rich displays of mercy, and when they daub themselves or their hearers with these as with untempered mortar, and silence the voice of conscience, and stop the progress of every honest conviction by the same means, they persist in calling all this faith, but I fear lest God should call it presumption. The language of scripture itself proves weak in the hearts of such. They read of an 'unspeakable joy,' and will take for granted they have it, rather than be convicted of lacking it, and so made earnest in praying for its entrance. They read of working out our salvation 'with fear and trembling,' even because God works all in all; yet the words enter no deeper and make no other impression than if the apostle had said, work it out with ease and security. They never discern the life and subduing power which the presence of the Spirit puts into the word, as our Lord says, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' And again, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word' (John vi. 63, and Isa. lxvi. 2).

But oh, what a fountain and springing well of pure and living water is this word of God to those that are humbled before him! It is also like fire and light; it searches, it tries the reins and the hearts; 'there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.' . . .

After this [Mr. Gilpin writes] I considered more at large the 51st Psalm, especially the words of the text, endeavouring, as far as I was enabled, to show the depth and compass of it; and then concluded as follows:—

The exhibition of David's principles we admire, we know them to have accorded with the mind and will of God: the application of them to ourselves we shrink from, because that application humbles us; and does indeed bring upon us much opposition and reproach amongst men. Also, which is more than all, it brings upon us the inward cross which is spiritual, which will manifest to us day by day increasingly the evil of our hearts, and so abase us more and more, even to self-abhorrence. Some of us have felt these things in a

[The following Notes of Mr. Gilpin's sermons were made by himself *after* preaching, in accordance with his invariable practice during the whole of his ministry in Port Vale, in order to preserve for his own use a summary of the line in which he had been led in treating the subject before him. Some of those selected for this volume will be found to correspond with particular exercises of his mind related in the diary, and to these an asterisk (*) is placed.]

Notes of several discourses, preached February and March 1836, on part of the First Epistle of Peter.

1 Peter i. 1–5. Here is in the first place the outward condition of these believers described; they are called 'strangers' and 'scattered.' But the apostle views them in God's light as the elect of the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, justified by Christ's blood. All believers are scattered strangers, and it is a mercy to be made to feel ourselves so. Then we must by grace be brought to the knowledge of the election, sanctification, and redemption here spoken of. First, let us consider the election. It must be unconditional, because the Lord sees only iniquity in the carnal nature of all men (Psalm xiv). To every one who is made to know his heart, this appears the only hope of salvation. Secondly, let us consider the sanctification. This is the creation of holiness in the new man; not the amelioration of the old man. Hence conviction of sin, humiliation, godly fear, and contrition are component parts of it. Thirdly, let us consider the redemption. Our only title to life is Christ's perfect work. His blood must however be applied, or as the expression here is, 'sprinkled,' in order to cleanse the conscience.

For those who are thus described, the prayer is that grace and peace may be 'multiplied.' This is most refreshing to the convinced sinner, cutting the sinews of self-righteous legal fears. His understanding and perception of God's mercy brings forth the words of gratitude. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' who 'hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,' &c. That this lively hope comes in through Christ's resurrection from the dead is most refreshing to the sinner convinced of his own spiritual death. The inheritance of glory is described as incorruptible, undefiled, unfading; it is kept for the people of God; and they are themselves kept, as in a fortress, by the power of God, through faith, unto that salvation that shall be at last revealed. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' This tower is perceived when grace discovers to us the truths declared to us in verse 2, and our interest in them.

Verses 6–9. The great joy and the heaviness are here spoken of as coincident in time. The heaviness is caused by the manifold

[illegible] The Lord [illegible] meet' [illegible] remainder, yet of [illegible] with an [illegible] I drawn thee.' [illegible] flesh; and [illegible] prevails. Then [illegible] 'I will build thee, and [illegible]

[illegible] Ephraim gave up to Zion. They had separated themselves from Zion at first. Let those who feel themselves at a distance because of their past sin, be encouraged to draw near. In [illegible] the singing and shouting, publishing and praising [illegible] this prayer in the spirit, 'O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.' For salvation is a very great mercy indeed: yet in blind profession it seems a matter of course. In verse 8 the Lord declares he will gather all his people, even from the uttermost [illegible] and bring them together 'a great company,' blind, lame, in labour and sore travail, coming with weeping, led with supplications: all these sets forth the humiliation and conflict of the way, and the weakness they feel. Yet these weak ones, being led of the Lord, are kept on a straight way, and stumble not: and they receive comfort even the living waters of the Spirit. This consolation [illegible] doctrine is worth in verses 10–14.

[illegible] not what to God's word in straits, for [illegible] and wonders than the sea. All these [illegible] [illegible] over and over again, of how the [illegible] [illegible] the great [illegible] [illegible] we may see [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

January 15, 1837.

On the parable of the sower. Luke viii. 4–15.

THE Lord is an example to us, scattering the good seed abroad widely, as is shown in the first verse of the text, 'And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable.' At the same time he was fully aware that no saving effect would ensue except through the special favour of grace, as is declared most strongly, verse 10, 'And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.' Now if we believe this word of our Lord we shall be the more anxious, and set ourselves in humble simplicity to beg him of his clemency to grant us this distinguishing grace. Also we shall not vaunt of our own understanding or ability, but beg the Holy Spirit so in mercy to convince us of our sin that our mouth may be in the dust. In this spirit may we now hear.

Let us not account much of our pains in hearing: do we hear aright? In many ways may the good seed be received in vain. 1st. By the wayside. Hear lightly, and the word is caught away. Such little suspect the vigilance of the enemy. Persons running after fashionable divinity, they scarcely believe in his existence, for he never alarms them. He is far too subtle. Yet he is a real. After hearing he sends a word by a worldly friend, a book, a thought, and all the effect of the preaching is lost. [illegible] This shows us the necessity of constant watching and prayer. 2nd. On stony ground. Here a wonderful effect is produced. We have heard of whole congregations melting and weeping, and the effect purely natural. Such cannot stand the trial: [illegible] it always comes, both outward and inward suffering, purifying, refining; only the gold will stand it. Long continued reproach, contempt, humiliation, if [illegible] remain, and [illegible] all because of the word. 3rd. Among thorns. The [illegible] high professors; these avowedly hate the word [illegible] seek to find salvation with the other. They are [illegible] not injure us, our hearts are [illegible] of their hearts, and ours!

Now we are all of us [illegible] serious matter for [illegible] in the following, 'Other fell on [illegible] good,' says Christ, therefore [illegible] that honest. There the seed [illegible] fruit; but 'with patience' [illegible]

Luke viii. 18. 'Take heed therefore [illegible] be given; and whosoever hath not, from him [illegible] to have.'

A WEIGHTY conclusion to the [illegible]

sword' that find grace; and that 'in the wilderness.' 'The Lord hath appeared of old (or, as it may be rendered, afar off) unto me;' as though he would describe some dark, obscure intimation, yet of what?—of his everlasting love; 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.' This drawing is sweet in the spirit, but crucifixion to the flesh; and for want of understanding this point much darkness prevails. Then the Lord speaks to the ruined cities of Israel, 'I will build thee, and thou shalt be built.'

Verse 6. Ephraim goes up to Zion. They had separated themselves from Zion at first. Let those who feel themselves at a distance because of their past sin, be encouraged to draw near. In verse 7 we see the singing and shouting, publishing and praising lead to this prayer in the spirit, 'O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.' For salvation is a very great mercy indeed: yet to blind professors it seems a matter of course. In verse 8 the Lord declares he will gather all his people, even from the uttermost coasts, and bring them together 'a great company,' blind, lame, in labour and sore travail, coming with weeping, led with supplications: all this sets forth the humiliation and conflict of the way, and the weakness they feel. Yet these weak ones, being led of the Lord, are kept in a straight way, and stumble not: and they receive comfort, even the living waters of the Spirit. This consolation is abundantly set forth in verses 10–14.

Now take notice; do not shut up God's word in straits, for it is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. All these things will receive partial fulfilments over and over again, if here the work of grace be carried on in the soul: but the grand final fulfilment is in the eternal state. And we may see this is so, only by considering the outward fulfilment of the chapter, as a prophecy respecting Jerusalem. For though it concludes thus, 'It shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever,' yet after these words the city was destroyed, rebuilt, destroyed again, and trodden under foot of the Gentiles; and the final restoration declared is still future. And the spiritual fulfilment is in the same manner.

Also the joy and the sorrow will be mingled. We may not take the joy and leave the sorrow; for if we have not both, we have neither. The joy is by the faith of God's operation. Israel is scattered and gathered also. The redemption of Christ is set forth in the words, 'The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he:' and when its power is spiritually discovered, we are brought to the joy 'in the height of Zion,' the flowing to the Lord's goodness, the being 'as a watered garden,' and satisfied with the Lord's goodness, as described by the prophet.

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Let us not account much of our pains in hearing: do we hear aright? In many ways may the good seed be received in vain. 1st. By the wayside. Hear lightly, and the word is caught away. Such little suspect the vigilance of the enemy. Perhaps relying on fashionable divinity, they scarcely believe in his bad influence, for he never alarms them. He is far too subtle. Yet he lies in wait. After hearing he sends a word by a worldly friend, a look, a vain thought, and all the effect of the preaching of God's word is gone. This shows us the necessity of constant watching unto prayer. 2nd. On stony ground. Here a wonderful effect is produced. We have heard of whole congregations melting, and what not. Yet the effect purely natural. Such cannot stand the tribulation: it comes, it always comes, both outward and inward, sifting, trying, purging, refining; only the gold will stand it. Long temptation, affliction, reproach, contempt, humiliation; or fear, conviction, doubt, terror; all because of the word. 3rd. Among thorns. The former are high professors; these avowedly hold the world in one hand, and seek to find salvation with the other. They say, The world does not injure us, our hearts are sound. Oh, the desperate deceitfulness of their hearts, and ours!

Now we are all of us represented in these particulars, but it is a serious matter for enquiry whether we are or are not represented in the following, 'Other fell on good ground.' A heart 'honest and good,' says Christ, therefore no natural heart, for he never called that honest. There the seed always abides, always brings forth fruit; but 'with patience,' not all at once.

Luke viii. 18, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.'

A WEIGHTY conclusion to the parable before rehearsed. I con-

sidered the particulars in this order: 1st. He that hath, to him shall be given. Christ says of this man, that he *hath*, but he does not say that he seems to have; probably he himself will be ready to conclude that he has nothing. But he is emptied, or in the way of becoming so, convinced of sin, poor in spirit, crying for mercy. Now what has he? He has the Spirit. The high and holy and lofty One is in his heart. Christ calls this something. Christ has respect unto the Spirit. This man shall have more. The increase of the Spirit; the fruits of the Spirit; in a word, salvation. 2nd. Others seem to have. Saith Christ, 'Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.' They make a goodly show. They compass the whole Bible in word. But all this is nothing. Really so. When the judgment is set and the books are open, all will be seen to be nothing. God will reward every one according to his works. If any have given to him, he shall be recompensed again. But man in his natural state is only a sinner, and has 'come short of the glory of God.' It shall be plain one day, God is right in thus judging.

Therefore 3rd. Take heed how ye hear. Not for curiosity, not in complacency, not as judges. The same word takes hold of hearers and preachers too. Let the Lord alone be regarded. A true ministry has this special effect, It 'raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and make them inherit the throne of glory,'—but it strips of all seeming shows; it reveals the heart. Therefore tremble: for the work in the power of it is a savour of life, or of death.

October 13, 1837.

Isaiah xliii. 1, 2, 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not,' &c.

Tenderness and sensibility of heart and conscience are blessed tokens of spiritual life. The conclusion of the chapter before my text shows us the displeasure of God against the contrary sins; and before I bring forward the subject of the text, I wish we may be enabled to lay this to heart. After the Lord has there set forth and magnified Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, he proceeds in the 22nd verse as follows, 'But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil and none saith, Restore:' which words contain a fearful description of the manifold snares into which even the people of God may fall. But the very hearing of these things is strange, we are so puffed up, and conceited, have such a presumptuous feeling (I speak to professors) that God is for us, and that we have a claim upon him: wherefore the Lord adds, 'Who among you will give

ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?' That is, he knows how ready we shall be to turn away from it; as many, when they hear this fear of God and his judgments on his people set forth, are ready to say, 'It is all legal bondage!' The Lord open their blind, blind eyes.

But at least 'for the time to come' may we now give ear to the things which follow, 'Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?' This short sentence contains the whole substance of what is set forth at large in the 80th Psalm: the destitution, affliction, oppression of the church, notwithstanding all the care and love of God. The cause of it is sin; the sin of these same, the workings of the body of sin and death in them; and if the life of God be in our souls we shall tremble at this. For this spoil and robbery is shown spiritually in the languor of vital religion in us, or in others. Many after a show of zeal or earnestness, forsaking their first love, and never returning to it again: for this is of the Lord because they became careless, and watched not unto prayer, but dallied with sin and the world, therefore the Lord himself has come upon them as a thief, they knew not when nor how, and they have neither peace nor unctuous light, nor joy in believing, nor any of the sweet and savoury fruits of the spirit. And in all this there are really the sad tokens of the Lord's anger, for they know nothing of his spiritual presence and favour, and their enemies prevail against them. 'He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle:' yet by reason of deadness and insensibility they lay these things not to heart; even though they are on fire with them, and half consumed, yet they lay it not to heart: for this is the charge in the last verse.

Wherefore, brethren, by the mercy of God may we of all things be enabled to watch and pray against this deadly insensibility of heart. If we tremble and fear, and cry and confess, then are we in a state to receive the words of my text like manna, 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.'

This creation and forming of Israel and Jacob by the Lord's own hand is assuredly not the mere natural creation. 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.' If we have not felt this with tender earnestness to be indeed most true, we are strangers yet to the deadly nature of the sin which dwells in us. Again I say, the Lord's word of power is 'Fear not;' but then he must address it to those who fear and tremble indeed, or it will be as water spilt on the ground. He proceeds to set before them their redemption, their effectual calling, and their election. 'I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.'

Now for our encouragement let us remember that the same Jacob and Israel, reproved in the last chapter for their insensi-

bility, may have this divine principle in them, which this word of the Lord will quicken into lively exercise. Wherefore let us labour at this point, to bow our whole hearts to desire this spiritual quickening, and attend to what the Lord says further to these same believers: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.'

The words are often quoted as a most gracious and tender promise; but one point in them is very often overlooked. It speaks peace to the church passing through fire and water: there is no exemption made: it is not a promise that they shall escape the fire and water, but of preservation in them. This gives the word a deeper character, and shows more that it is a sharp two-edged sword, than some seem to be aware of. But what is it that shall escape destruction in this terrible baptism and purification? I know this, it will lay hold of our pride and self-righteousness, conceit, vanity, lust, envy, and every part of our fleshly nature, to consume it as dross: but the faith and the tenderness, the repentance, godly fear, hope, love, and joy in the Lord shall all escape unhurt, and be greatly advanced. This is no other than the words imply with which our Lord closes his ministry, Peace in me: tribulation in the world.

October 15, 1837.

Isaiah xliii. 1, 2, 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not,' &c.

In my last sermon on these words I principally confined my attention to the context. But there are several points exceedingly important to be laid to heart, to which I must now further speak.

1st. That we earnestly seek by the mercy of God to attain to that fear and sensibility of heart and conscience which will urge us unreservedly to attend to the secret teaching of God: not to be found in the spirit of the world: not to be resting short of the full revelation of grace in the heart; which is the acknowledgment from God himself of his favour, grace, and protection in our behalf.

This was the issue of Hezekiah's great temptation and trouble, when he thought the Lord would even make an end of him, and chattered like a crane, and Isaiah could not comfort him, but was at first an instrument in God's hand to increase his fears,—'thou shalt die, and not live.' Then in the last extremity the Lord showed him his own divine work of grace wrought in his soul, that he was really upright in God's sight, and he 'turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart:' and the prayer prevailed with God. This was by

reason of his being made clean through the power of the word spoken to his heart, as of the application of such a sentence as this in the text, Fear not—I have redeemed, called, chosen THEE.

2nd. To those who are set to find these things verified in their hearts, the Lord further speaks, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,' &c. I have already shown what the terror as well as the sweetness of this passage is; namely, that it is addressed to the church passing through fire and water, both. Now I would consider from the word of God further how it is fulfilled.

In the Psalms we have manifold descriptions of the feelings of the saints in these troubles; as e. g. in the 69th Psalm, 'Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.' Further on, 'Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.' From which it is manifest that though the promise of my text stands sure for ever, it is not so sensibly and immediately fulfilled that we escape the trouble, but we are helped to cry mightily to God in it; and this betokens the Lord's presence, 'I will be with thee;' and though not at that time to a full deliverance, the deliverance comes in due time. But the Spirit of God passes beyond this emblem of water, even to express the trials under the emblem of fire: and here we need the caution contained in the 4th of 1 Peter, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you;' for it is not strange: but that which the apostle concludes the chapter with declaring—The righteous are hardly saved; i. e. saved through many and great difficulties. If we must draw a distinction between the water and the fire, I believe we may say in general that those trials which are more distinctly spiritual, may be denominated 'fiery:' such as that of Hezekiah, 'I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones.' Here is God as 'a consuming fire.' And the saints are deeply led into these things according to the will and by the wisdom of God, that they may be convinced of the truth, and of the power and value of Christ's mighty and free salvation. And this is a deep mysterious path which is opened by my text to the people of God in such troubles as these, viz. that in the very heart of them, in the heat of the furnace, they should set themselves to seek for Christ and to bring Christ in by faith, for this will save them. It is set forth to us in the 3rd of Daniel, where we see that the exercise of God's fear brought the three children into the furnace: but there their bands were burned; so will all our corruptions be there consumed, that we shall walk at liberty; but as for their persons they were unhurt; and so shall it be with us—the flame shall not kindle upon thee. And how so? Because of the presence of Christ. This last point then is the one on which we must lay the stress: Christ brought in and the fire will purify, but it will not consume.

March 11, 1838.

2 Corinthians i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.'

THE apostle Paul was greatly tried both as a man and as a minister; and in many places his authority, as a minister, was set at nought: but he found the trials not only beneficial, but needful, and declares in this very chapter, 'as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' It is only through sanctified trouble that we can attain to the same rich experience of the peace which passeth understanding; which, indeed, is showed to us to be divine, by its prevailing power over all conceivable trials. He sets forth his trial in Asia very movingly; 'pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life; but we had the sentence of death in ourselves.' These things are calculated to show us the exceeding great tenderness and spiritual trembling which grace works in the heart by reason of which the afflictions become profitable, leading us to deep heart-searching and confession, and most humble supplication; and then the deliverance is felt to be great, and brings the Lord's peace and love with it; and we say, 'Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.'

Now all these things are the preparation for what he speaks of in the text—joy from the testimony of his conscience. This is far removed from legal pride. John says the same, 'If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.' But then our enquiry must be, What sort of heart and conscience are here spoken of? For any to speak thus in their natural state, dark, estranged from the life of God, without the Spirit's almighty power, searching the heart, and bringing Christ into the conscience, is most awful presumption. But Paul and John speak in a far different spirit. They had the life of God. That light had searched out their own delusions, and established them in Christ. Paul describes this work of conversion in many of his writings; and how he had died, while sin revived, under the wrath of the law; and how sin died, and he was raised with Christ under the grace of the gospel: therefore the testimony of his conscience was the testimony of God in his conscience; his conscience being purified by the blood of Christ, and then able to bear a most true witness.

I then proceeded to consider, in order, the testimony borne; that he had had his conversation both in the world and in the church, in godly simplicity and sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom; and that this was by the grace of God. I enlarged much on the necessity of these things, both to private believers and ministers. And especially coming to the knowledge of the effectual grace of the Holy Spirit, which is the only means of working in us that humble dependence and lively trust in God which enable us to renounce fleshly wisdom.

2 Corinthians i. 18–20, 'But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.'

See now the further effects of that divine light by which the apostle found the testimony of his conscience; he finds also that as God is true, his ministry hath not been yea and nay. He had not said and unsaid; as those do who consider what is expedient, fearing outward circumstances; or who speak from memory or intellectual knowledge alone; or who steal words or scraps from others, to make a show of them; or use words for effect, the power of which they never felt: all these say, and probably too much, but they as often unsay again the truths they have crudely advanced; and often dissemble. Now the consistency of which the apostle speaks was because in the spirit he preached Jesus Christ wholly and alone, who is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;' 'not yea and nay, but in him was yea.' This preaching Christ in the Spirit is to bring in Christ alive, working, present; and all our dealing in the spiritual life is with him, and with the Almighty through him. And he is the fulfilment, in that he is the fulfiller of every one of the promises, all yea, and Amen in him,—without him there is no application of one of them.

On this I greatly enlarged; pressing most of all the necessity of a most earnest looking out for Christ, such as David describes in the 130th Psalm. Yea, though we toil and row, the wind being contrary, that he would come to us on the sea. Whatever we want, light, peace, direction, love, zeal, holiness, it is all found in him; and nothing but confusion, uncertainty, fear, guilt, wrath, and darkness without him. Keep at this one point, to beseech him most humbly, and in most abject confession, to turn and look upon you: and you need look for no one thing besides in heaven or on earth; for he will bring all with him. The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; the mountains shall sink, and the valleys shall rise, and your way into heaven itself be made manifest in his divine light.

April 8, 1838.

Isaiah xlviii. 1, 2, 'Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The Lord of hosts is his name.'

It is true, if we merely consider these words as addressed to the national Israel, we shall not feel much the power of them; but the

living fear of God, and power of his work in our souls, will not suffer us thus to set aside scripture; for we shall know that it often speaks in a parable: and blessed are they who are enabled to receive the application of it. The Lord here sets forth the sin of his regenerated people, that they may both hear and fear. For if faith be increased, so must repentance also. Nor does the scripture recognise any faith as real, which does not also bring in a real brokenness of heart, accompanied with an increasing discernment of the evil of our nature. In their spiritual application the words of the text are well calculated to produce this effect: and the remainder of the chapter, when viewed in this spiritual light, also shows that notwithstanding all the Lord here says against his people, he acknowledges them as his own, whom he hath chosen in the furnace of affliction, and will not cut off for his name's sake.

Let us therefore more particularly consider these words, 'Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah.' We know why Jacob was called Israel; even because he prevailed with God: and these are so called. Moreover they 'come forth out of the waters of Judah;' now waters do very frequently denote troubles, and Judah signifies praise; so that the children of Israel came forth, for example, out of the waters of Judah, when on the shore of the Red Sea, beholding all their enemies dead, they believed his words, and sang his praise (Psalm cvi. 12). Also, their swearing by the name of the Lord, is a testimony of faith in God as the omniscient Judge and ruler of the world. But, says the prophet in the text, all this, and their making mention of the God of Israel, is 'not in truth, nor in righteousness.' Furthermore these people call themselves of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the saints foreknown and redeemed by Christ, the people whom the Father gave him, for whom he prayed that they should be preserved for ever, and to whom he gives his glory (John xvii), nay, they rely, or stay themselves upon the God of Israel.

Now it behoves us well to examine ourselves. There are many in a profession who do not come so far as this. They know nothing about the holy city, and boast that they presume not to call themselves of it at all; and yet they think it will be well with them, and they are satisfied. Others, again, get to know it all, yet only in an intellectual manner; they presume that they are indeed citizens of the holy city, yet they know nothing beyond the letter of the word. I am sure that if the Lord draw nigh to bring any soul among these different classes of professors to a saving knowledge of the truth, this their religion is in the first place clean burnt up. They perceive it to be a shadow, and no substance in it.

But the text goes further: for I am deeply persuaded that the severe reproof these words contain, lights on much that is found among truly regenerated persons. And one great use and standing benefit of the ministry of the word is so to discover this to such as

are truly brought to Christ, as to enable them to separate between the wheat and the chaff in themselves. Wherever there is a prevalency with God, a real coming forth out of the waters of Judah, there is the seed of God which is incorruptible, and which God will never forsake. This victory and deliverance, which is of God, brings forth joy, peace, humiliation, gratitude, affiance in spirit: but the enemy watches to sow tares among the wheat, both in Christ's church and in the heart; so there springs up a crop of presumption, pride, hardness of spirit, easy security, contempt of others, and I know not what evils beside. Therefore we have reason to watch, and be sober. Because in consequence of these evils coming in unperceived, there is a great falling away, and great darkness, with many signs of God's displeasure. Some may comfort themselves, saying, Ah, all this trouble is as it pleases God, who is a sovereign, to send upon us. Yet, there is no heart-searching discovery of the evils which cause the darkness and trouble, no humble falling down and confession of sin, no self-loathing, nor fruits of that deep contrition and repentance, which, being found, manifest, even in the darkness, that the Spirit really is present, and works. 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord (mark that), that obeyeth the voice of his servant (mark that), that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' But without the fear and obedience (not legal, but in the Spirit), whoever talks of trust and confidence, let them know, that not these blessed words, but the last part of the text describes their perilous condition (Isa. l. 10, 11).

April 22, 1838.

Isaiah xxx. 18–21, 'And therefore will the Lord wait,' &c.

I PARAPHRASED the chapter from the 1st to the 26th verse; but enlarged especially on the text.

I noticed, from the 1st and 2nd verses, the disposition to rest upon an arm of flesh; from the 6th verse, the trouble which causes us to seek for this wrong relief; and from the 7th, the fruitless issue of all such speculations. Also I showed at large what is meant by finding our strength in sitting still: not indeed in indolence and presumption; but in fear, crying, faith, patience; broken off from all confidence in ourselves and in man. Though we may suppose that the prophet's words have a special external reference to the conduct of the Jews of that day, yet it is said in the 8th verse that this is to be written for ever, as it has been, that all generations may lay it to heart, and that that spiritual seed, with whom the testimony and law are sealed up, may see their own sin as in a glass; for they also (I am sure *we*) shrink from all that really humbles,

and want the smooth things (verses 9–11). And we shall do well to notice how terrible God's anger is against those who despise this word, and trust in oppression (*margin*, fraud) and perverseness; i. e. against those who are not humbled in deep self-abasement as sinners, according to the charge here made, but are resting in a most deceitful presumption—'This iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall; . . . whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.' And in the next verse (the 14th) there is a most awful description of this breaking in pieces. Now if this be taken as a final discovery of their delusion, made to impenitent sinners in fiery wrath, it is dreadful. But it is fulfilled in a merciful sense in the behalf of those who are brought out of a false profession to the power of the truth. Such, in the breaking in pieces which they feel, cannot find one sherd, scrap, rag or remnant of their old religion to do them any good; and in this clear cutting off from error, they afterwards find great profit.

Then the Lord returns again (verse 15) to speak about the rest, quietness, and confidence, wherein is salvation; this is the same kind of waiting and sitting still, spoken of in the 7th verse, united with a full and gracious discovery of salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and a spiritual entering into Jesus Christ, indeed. Instead of this, by reason of our sinful pride, self-righteousness and unbelief, we will flee on horses and ride on the swift (verse 16). Here I entered upon most tender and awful ground. We are continually, in our own hearts, perverting these things: one time by obscuring the grace and perfection of Christ's work, our only foundation; and another time, through the subtle sin of our hearts, and Satan's craft, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. This exercise of the power of faith, to which we are here called, is indeed the most soul-humbling, sin-mortifying state in which any saint can abide; and the legal working and striving is resorted to, only because this mortification and humiliation are too great and too holy for us to endure. But, in consequence, the Lord goes on to say, Ye shall flee 'till ye be left as a beacon.' Such is the poor, mean, destitute condition of Christ's church upon earth: almost all complaining, seldom abiding in the true spiritual joy and strength of the Lord. Why is this? Says David at large in the 80th Psalm, 'Why hast thou broken down her hedges?' And the answer is given us here, 'Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.' This waiting of the Lord we are made deeply sensible of; we find it requires long and constant application to come to the real experience of the Lord's mercy; and when he leads us to a terrible view of his majesty and holiness in his fiery law, then he is exalted indeed, yet still that he may manifest grace. By means of these discoveries of God in judgment and in mercy, we come to the spiritual Zion, and heavenly Jerusalem, and true communion of saints, spoken of in the 19th verse, where we find his

presence revealed, and his gracious answers to our prayers. Though here we find affliction, yea, we feed upon it, 'bread of adversity and the water of affliction,' yet our spiritual eyes are open to see those whose words teach us indeed; and our spiritual ears open to hear the word behind us, whenever, as is frequently the case, we turn to the right hand or to the left.

I must now briefly hint at some of the effects of the coming in of this mighty religion as described in the following verses: 1. The defiling and casting away of all our former idols, mentioned verse 22. 2. The fruitfulness, enlargement, and liberty described in the 23rd verse and onward. 3. The increase of light, till even what was only the feeble reflection of grace from another, in our heart, like the moon, becomes as the sun for strength, in that day when our wide breach is closed, and our sore wound healed (verse 26).

July 8, 1838.

Galatians vi. 9. 'And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'

The great danger is, lest we make a mistake in this point, as to what the well doing, spoken of, means. We may labour in the flesh at what we call well doing all our lives long, and do nothing well; as Solomon pointedly observes, 'The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.'

Wherefore, by the help of God, I desire to speak a little to this point. The well doing comes not without the power of God's grace first. Whenever the Spirit quickens any soul, however differently such a soul may be led in various points from others similarly quickened, this is plain; there will be real anxiety and real prayer put into the heart. 'O send out thy light and thy truth.' 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Here God will begin to fulfil his great word, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' Oh, how great the difference between the whole-hearted confidence with which such used to reason and define and dogmatize, and the tender fear and trembling with which they now tremble before God's majesty!

Where there is only a form without the power, there is a ready attaining to all things in word, which, being mistaken for the real attainment of them, is quickly advanced to the highest place; but when God teaches, he humbles, proves, empties, and reproves the soul. He hides himself in thick darkness, and 'his footsteps are not known.' Wherefore such are kept in much weakness, crying for mercy and help. See how David traces the Lord's leadings in the 22nd of the 2nd of Samuel. Sorrow, death, hell prevent him;

he cries: the Lord answers in clouds and darkness and the whirlwind, causing heaven and earth to tremble. After all these things the victory comes.

This is always the Lord's way, but when these things are continued long, and there is a sore succession of trials, we are apt to find our hearts fail. Then the word comes fitly spoken, 'Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' Go on through all in deep confession, earnest prayer, patient hope; in due season ye shall reap. It is a great matter in personal religion duly to distinguish times and seasons. Night is not day, nor winter summer, nor seed time harvest; either in the natural or spiritual world; and as long as both stand, there shall be a succession or interchange of these. Wherefore here we must remember what the apostle James exhorts to,—the long patience of the husbandman; and David also, 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' How small in the eyes of the world, and of all false professors, are those sighs, groans, and tears which accompany the seed of the word: yet such shall reap in due time, that is, in God's time, as he sees good. Not that he keeps his people waiting till death; he gives them a rich earnest now; and when they have it, they possess all things, for the Spirit is with them. Yet this victory does not remain unshaken, and when sin clouds it, the recollection of it will never satisfy them without a renewal. The Lord give us grace to enter into these things effectually. Amen.

September 16, 1838.

Galatians v. 5–7. 'For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?'

I ENDEAVOURED to enter into the difficulties and snares which beset us in the way of life; and how many turn aside, who seemed to run well, yet never really began in the Spirit. Therefore I exhorted each to give the more earnest heed to the description here given of faith working by love, keeping us through the Spirit waiting for the hope of righteousness by faith.

My principal endeavour was to describe the origin, first actings, accompaniments, consequences, and victory of this 'faith which worketh by love;' that being feelingly without it, we cry for it; that it is wrought in great humiliation, for without the humiliation our pride keeps us from the love which accompanies it. This love is from a feeling sense of mercy, and it brings with it great tenderness for others, and with this we wait, and that, 'through the Spirit,'

so that the waiting is in abounding hope, desire, prayer, and diligence; and we thus 'wait for the hope of righteousness,' which is full salvation, for the righteousness is no less than Christ's, which we receive and put on, and therefore its hope is the glory of the highest heaven, due to it.

December 28, 1838.

Hebrews vi. 9, 'But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.'

THE words in the earlier part of the chapter are very fearful words; many sincere persons, at times, fear their condition is pointed out in them, and that they can never be renewed to repentance; not considering, that if they fear this hardened condition, they are not in it. But many, besides these, fear lest they should be left to it hereafter; and this often urges them to cry and wrestle with the Lord, and thus proves beneficial.

And in the text we learn that the Lord's ministers may seem to speak thus fearfully, and yet be persuaded of better things, perceiving in those they speak to, the 'things that accompany salvation.' Even in the passing under dark thick clouds, there are fear, patience, prayer, and hope, such as are described in the conclusion of the chapter, as in the instance of Abraham's patient endurance. For it happens to those whom the Spirit has quickened, that they are often most deeply tried, in order that they may know their sins, and appreciate the freeness of grace. The Lord, at times, takes no notice, apparently, of our prayers. This is terrible. David, in this trouble, feared lest he should become like unto them that go down into the pit. At other times, the Lord seems to discourage either by deep convictions or otherwise. Blessed is that man who endures, knowing, in all these terrible trials, he is in the very footsteps of the flock. Here, that labour, patience, prayer, and hope, in increasing operation, are the 'things that accompany salvation.'

Besides these things we must consider our Lord's marks, the graces of the Spirit, which he pronounces blessed; and the persons in whom they are found, blessed. And sometimes he enables us to see one or another as wrought within us. Blessed are the poor (not the rich) in spirit, the meek, the mourners, the hungry. Oh! that righteousness of Christ, how shall I attain it? How my soul longs for it! These are merciful and tender, being partakers of mercy. They are peacemakers, and labouring for the peace of God; and all this is so contrary to the spirit of the world, that they are persecuted and evil spoken of.

The stedfast exhibition of these things makes our spirit very

uncongenial with the spirit of the world. And this is a blessed mark of the favour of God, and its benefit is great, in making us so to be separated from the world that we escape many of its pollutions.

May 19, 1839.

John iv. 22–24, 'Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'

Our Lord's words do in a special manner apply to us when we begin to be convinced of our natural ignorance. However much we may have been outwardly taught respecting the Lord, still we knew him not; and worshipped we knew not what. This, spiritually shown, works a fear and a cry, 'O send out thy light and thy truth.' And, doubtless, had we been witnesses of the Lord's operation in the heart of this woman, we should have perceived this cry. The Lord proceeds, 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' So, I say, whenever this spiritual conviction urges us to this cry, it is the beginning of all acceptable worship. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all present, and favourable, though the soul discern not this love, but is afraid of presuming. The Lord says, 'The Father,' 'the Father;' and, as it seems to me, not here using this term in order to distinguish the person of the Father, but in order to show the relation in which God is to be sought, and which he will own to such a soul. They shrink from this through fear and conviction: he pursues them, seeking such to worship him. This is a sweet encouraging aspect. The influence of the Spirit it is which thus subdues their hearts, so that their worship is in spirit; and all he influences them to is the truth. And those who are thus taught are brought to a certain power of many great truths of scripture, absolutely distinct from, and beyond all opinion; for what is really inwrought in experience transcends all opinion. I say not that this will be perfect, for in many things we shall be liable to err, and must stand in awe continually lest we be left to ourselves; but I do say that we must both seek and find this light and power of the Spirit to guide us into all truth, and to give us a persuasion which shall be establishing of his divine hand and mercy in it. We must be brought to this: and there are some of us who have proved it, and must prove it more abundantly.

December 25, 1839.

Isaiah ix. 6, 7, 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.'

I BEGAN this sermon by referring to the beginning of Titus iii, wherein we are exhorted to all quietness, sobriety, patience, and peace with all men; because we must remember our own folly and disobedience, which nothing overcame but the appearing of the love of God our Saviour; which appearing is the spiritual application of the gospel, and is the only effectual remedy to the dreadful sin of our nature.

Here, in the chapter of my text, the prophet speaks of a terrible battle, which is 'with burning and fuel of fire;' which denotes the spiritual conviction of the Holy Ghost; but here the Saviour comes in, 'Unto us a child is born;' still very small and feeble and humble, no outward show of greatness: the power of all which will be most deeply felt in the spirit of every one, who learns in deep crying and seeking for mercy, to find a divine spring of hope, wrought by God in his soul. For this Lord Jesus, who is born in such weakness, proves mighty indeed. 'The government shall be upon his shoulder.' I feel sensible, in some degree, of the amazing help and joy which the spiritual opening of this truth affords, to give us rest from every kind of labour in a legal spirit; not the rest of sloth, or sinful indifference; but a rest above all natural understanding. Wherefore his name is indeed 'Wonderful,' and will be felt increasingly so; and he alone is the 'Advocate' on whom his people most safely rely. He is no less than 'The mighty God,' and 'The everlasting Father,' —which title is not to lead us to confound the persons of the Father and of the Son, but to acknowledge that to both belong the same divinity, as creating, upholding, directing all things; who, together with the Holy Ghost, are addressed unitedly as one, if we are enabled to pray aright 'Our Father.' And, lastly, this child born, and son given is called, 'The Prince of Peace,' which means especially that he made peace through the blood of his cross;' and so gives us the victory in that very battle which is with 'burning and fuel of fire.'

'Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.' I endeavoured to set forth what I had felt of the power of that word 'increase;' that is, the increase of what appeared so very small at first, as the true kingdom of Christ is always felt, because of the humiliation that attends it. But mark, that humiliation brings us under his spiritual government, which is to increase, as well as the peace, for ever. This dominion is to be on the throne

and kingdom of David, to denote that it is to be over the spiritual Israel alone: others know nothing at all about it, but those whom it pleases God to call: and truly, we are unable upon this point to go one tittle beyond the word of the Lord; being made so sensible of our utter dependence on his sovereign and efficacious grace, that if any other foundation be laid, we are undone. But this kingdom is ordered and established by the zeal of the Lord of hosts, and it is so established 'with judgment and justice:' which most surely sets forth the convictions that lead to repentance; and the bringing in of the atoning blood of Christ, to satisfy infinite justice.

July 23, 1841.

Psalm cxlvi. 3, 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.'

The Psalmist is filled with the pure spirit of gratitude and joy in the Lord, i. e. as we must always remember, in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the one undivided Jehovah. But in the midst of this joy his renewed heart, made jealous by the encroaching inroads of indwelling sin, puts in this caution, 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.' This he and we also, even though renewed, are continually in danger of doing; and such is our sin that to have this unfaithfulness to God continually discovered and checked is very painful and humbling; and we could often wish that flaming sword of the Spirit, turning every way, might but be averted from us. Let us by the grace of God rather fall under it, that this enmity may be slain.

The text then contains a caution against trusting in any other except alone in God, as revealed in the gospel. And we shall none of us, if we know our own hearts, have far to look before we perceive that it is needful, seeing some confidence in ourselves or in others is ever on the watch to come in. Now that which makes the spirit of this divine caution very hard to attain, is this, that by God's express appointment men are made to be of great use to one another. Parents to children, husbands to wives, wives to husbands, ministers to people, people to ministers, &c. And pray, are these claims to be set aside? No. Are we not to labour for each other's good? Yes. Are we not to be thankful for the mutual help afforded? Yes. What then must we make of the text? Now, this is one part of that way 'which the vulture's eye hath not seen,' and we shall never understand, except the Lord anoint our eyes with the Holy Spirit. Then we shall see that there is a way in which all this subordination one to another is to be maintained, and yet, for all that, our treacherous hearts, ever seeking to be something, and to make men something, must be daily and hourly mortified, and taught that God is all. And

if we are not spiritually watchful here, and find victory over our pride, out of Christ fulness, we shall not at all like the ways which God takes for discovering to us and correcting in us this creature-love. For the Psalmist glances at one of the chief of these in the next verse, 'His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.' As if he had said, Behold your idol! It is only breathless clay! Therefore, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.' The clear discovery of this mercy is by no means easy; but the earnest seeking for it is very blessed. For in the concluding verses we have such a description of these characters, as shows us how great their conflict, and hard their victory, leaving no room for any to be crowned but such as are broken in heart, humbled, and tried by grace. The Lord executeth judgment for the oppressed. He giveth food to the hungry. He relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. The Lord himself reigns over Zion, the same always, and therefore now.

July 3, 1842.

Revelations x. 8-11, 'And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.'

Probably, as most commentators seem to agree, the angel which here appeared was himself Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant. The series of visions and prophesyings which the apostle was favoured with, was interrupted by this one. He was sent to the angel for the book, which at the word of the Lord he ate up, and found it sweet and bitter. Then he was assured that he should prophesy again. This happened for his spiritual profit, and ours. The word which he was the instrument of writing, must be inwardly spiritually received and digested by himself, and prove both sweet and bitter; by which means he would be fitted for further ministrations. Moreover, the angel, that is, as I believe, Christ, gave him the book for this end, which teaches us, (as well as that account given us in the 5th chapter of the Lamb prevailing to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof,) that this power inwardly to digest God's word is one of the fruits of Christ's mediation. If you want it, seek to Christ diligently to give it to you,—O give me the little book. Know of a surety that thus receiving the word indeed, we

shall find it both sweet and bitter; yea, the bitterness is here described as the most inward and abiding of the two. And yet we must notice that it made way for this renewal of the apostle's strength, 'Thou must prophesy again.'

Now who can set forth the bitterness, the causes and consequences of it? What mean those who spend their time in a critical examination, e. g. of this very book of the Revelations, trying to explain its figurative prophecies, and then consider that they have performed a religious exercise? I am not against their so studying the word, but against the deceitful imagination that this is true devotion. This is not inwardly digesting the word. The scorpions of error, the dragon whose tail drew down the stars, the deceitful witchcrafts of the false church with her golden cup, the persecutions and oppressions of the true church in the wilderness and in sackcloth, are all of them fearful subjects for meditation. Who are we that we should escape? Have we escaped? Have we the marks of the true Christ really in us? It is written of the company that stood with the Lamb on the mount Sion, they were undefiled virgins, i. e. not mixed up and incorporated with the errors, but witnesses against them. It is written there was no deceit in their mouth, i. e. they did not with light in their head declaim against the errors which they held fast in their life, but they were honest in word and deed.

All this is not easy. The feeling of this creates bitterness. The bitterness must not be the sorrow of the world working death, but repentance unto life. Sinking we must cry, and find Christ the atoner, Christ the purifier, Christ the restorer.

O Lord enable us to understand these things.

December 23, 1843.*

Psalm lxix. 7, 'Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.'

This reproach, which was borne by Christ himself, is what all who truly fear God find in their measure, and will find during the days of their earthly pilgrimage. The soul being awakened by grace begins to discern the spiritual presence of the Lord, and is moved tenderly to walk in his fear, to escape those things which grieve and offend the Lord, and to be faithful to his cause, and on his side in an ungodly world. This proceeding is always contrary to the world and the flesh, and brings reproach upon us. And it is astonishing how greatly our hearts will be subdued to seek and find the Lord's direction and mercy, to beware of rashness and folly, to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean to our own understanding. But it will be said that we are morose, and bigoted, and perverse, and what not that is bad. The meek endurance of

the cross in continuing to follow the Lord is an especial mark of his grace.

This meek endurance I wish to touch upon from this word, 'Shame hath covered my face,' i. e. the Psalmist did not show a hard spirit and brazen front against the reproach, but his spirit fell. The trouble, whatever it be, and whoever is the instrument, is still sent by God upon us, and the shame felt will most especially be before God, 'I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee'—for in his sight we are sinners indeed. As for the reproach and the shame of it before men, it is not joyous but grievous, only we would endure it rather than forsake the living fear and spiritual direction of the Lord.

O my brethren, if we can say that such is our line of conduct, it is indeed well for us. This is most truly bearing the reproach for the Lord's sake, 'Because for thy sake,' &c. Though we are sorely conscious of many sins, enmity, and pride against the Lord, in our carnal nature which will endure nothing for his sake; yet the feeling of this evil is grievous, it makes us still long after Jesus, and follow him everywhere, seeking for him. Blessed are we when the Lord shows us that this living faith and fear are in us.

December 25, 1843.

Song viii. 1, 2, 'O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.'

This is a very beautiful and a very instructive passage, the allegory is very simple and clear, the spiritual meaning of it immediately suggesting itself to the awakened heart. For here is Christ's church, especially the ancient church, described as longing intensely for his incarnation or manifestation in the flesh, 'O that thou wert as my brother!' Nor is this all, the entreaty is further made that he might derive consolation and instruction himself, even as she did, 'O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!' This prayer was fulfilled in both its parts when the Lord Jesus took our nature, and joined it in unity of person with the Godhead for ever and ever. It is a mysterious but certain truth, that not only the glory of his Godhead remained unchanged, but also that as man he acted in the freest and fullest manner according to that inferior nature. Did he not find consolation, just as we must, in faith and prayer, and the communion of saints, and the word of God? Certainly he did, and all this was nothing less than sucking the breasts of our mother.

When this unity of Christ with us is at all opened by the Spirit to

our needy souls, what can exceed the consolation? Well might the ancient church say, O that it were so! and we also enter into the same prayer, O that the truth of this were more and more revealed to us! It gives a new and peculiar character to the love which the Lord puts into our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. This Solomon intimates, 'When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.' This ardour of affection is always tempered by a holy reverence in the real children of God. It is not that they indulge in a light and unsavoury profession of loving Christ, as we see in those whose hearts never tremble at his majesty. But still it is affection for a near and equal relation, Brother, Husband, Friend—he is called all these. This tenderness of affection as he first showed it for us, so does he allow us to show it for him; yea, he delights in it. He despises it not, neither does the Father despise it, 'I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.'

But now is this love an idle barren affection in her heart? Pray what use will she make of it? Let us see. 'I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me.' Aye, to bring him with her to the ordinances of God's grace and worship, that is most profitable. My mother, she says, would then instruct me. Why this is the very secret of finding a blessing in the ministry of the word, in the sacraments, in private prayer and communion, and meditation in God's word. We see here how intent she is upon this, that she may receive instruction. Christ's true church is always poor and needy.

As to what I call the distribution of the church, in this book of Solomon's Song, into mother, bride, and daughters, surely it betokens nothing else than the various states of the Lord's people upon earth, all united, but 'subject one to another,' and the younger submitting themselves to the elder.

Lastly, there is this further point. The church which thus carries Christ with her, not only finds instruction herself, but ministers refreshment even to him, 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.' This is no other than that flowing out of the heart in holy affection and communion which pleases the Lord well. None can do this but such as finding Christ their Brother, bring him with them into their mother's house.

June 2, 1844. *

2 Corinthians vi. 2, 'For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.'

THERE are two states of mind wherein these words may, by the mercy of God, prove very instructive and consoling. The one is when (as is often the case with God's children) we are pressed down

with fear, darkness, and conviction: the other is when we rejoice in the divine application of God's mercy in Christ.

Let those in the first state diligently attend to the words, and see what they can pick out of them:—that the time of mercy is not just when and as they please, but as God pleases; wherefore let them not be overmuch cast down: that as there is the day of salvation, so there must needs be a day in which that salvation is hidden, and our lost condition felt; or else there is nothing peculiar in the blessing: also, that if in that day he succours us, it is because we surely stand in need of his succour; i. e. we are destitute.

Again, when we are brought to any power and divine opening of the hope, it is, according to my text, the free gift, the opening of the heaven of mercy; we have not atoned for nor extinguished our sin, but God in Christ comes in through the gospel and does all. Here by the mercy of God let us admire and adore the mystery of grace, the co-operation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the mediation of Christ being like Jacob's ladder in our souls, opening the only way between a sinner and the Lord's love. Let us then, whatever may be our state, seek to understand the text in the power and substance of it, which sets forth that there is this acceptable time, and day of salvation, which God alone, not ourselves, can bring: that the power which brings this day is ever abroad upon the earth, for 'he saith,' i. e. he keeps saying, 'I have heard thee' &c. He said it when he promised Christ in paradise; he said it in Isaiah's days (vide chap. xlix. 8); he said it in Paul's days; he says it yet. Know therefore it is heaven upon earth to hear his voice, and to understand it.

This voice is the opening of the gospel, as set forth in the conclusion of the chapter before the text. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. . . . Now then we are ambassadors for Christ *as though God did beseech you by us:* we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. . . .' The Lord keep us all from that dire perversion of these great words so common where the sovereign power of God's grace is unfelt, as though they meant that God would beg his creatures to accept his offered mercy, and because they will not, all this glory is to be set aside. Such is the gospel many preach: a gospel which comes not from heaven. Indeed, these words mean differently, even that God smites and brings down our pride and vain conceit, and shows us that we are helpless, lost, and dead. Then, when we utterly give up all hope in ourselves, when we tremble, shrink back, and dare not behold, then he comes gently in this wind of the gospel, saying, *I beseech you*, and all who hear it LIVE. And all his true ministers, who are made to watch his hand and influence, not of themselves, but as 'workers together with him,' say to each, 'Receive not the grace of God in vain; be not puffed up; do not be lightminded and forget it; do not dream that you can help yourselves; wait upon his holy Majesty, cry, confess, fall down; watch and pray always.'

June 9, 1844. *

1 Samuel vii. 12, 'Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.'

THIS example of Samuel is very encouraging and instructive to all who truly fear the Lord, and very reproving to all stoutness and harshness of spirit in religion, like that of those who are high in the knowledge of the letter of gospel doctrine without drinking into Christ's meek and lowly spirit. Let us endeavour by the grace of God to follow Samuel's example, for we have reason (I am sure I have): and though the enemy will try to prevent this, and represent it as presumptuous in those who ought to do it, and safe for those who ought not, let us use the weapons of prayer and confession against him: and let us consider the circumstances in which Samuel did it.

It was after God had forsaken his tabernacle at Shiloh, and the ark itself had been taken captive for seven months, and though restored had not been sought unto for twenty years, during which time 'all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.' Things then were very low and dark, and the enemies the Philistines bare rule. But when God's word came to Samuel, it was on this wise, 'If ye prepare your hearts unto God only and put away Ashtaroth, then he will deliver you.' So I say to you; if you seek first deliverance from your trials, you will be likely to fail; but if you through grace seek first the kingdom, you shall prevail. You are oppressed by man: true; but you serve the world's idols, such as mammon, which is as bad as Ashtaroth; put these away and you shall find the Lord's help. This is the course which his spiritual church and people are always made to take. The Israelites took it; they humbled themselves, and poured out water, even as their hearts were poured out like water, and you know water that is spilt cannot be gathered up again, so every true child of God will pour out his heart in confession and cannot gather up again his self-abasing words, for he knows all he says is but too true. Then the Philistines came down, just as the world and our spiritual enemies, watching when sinners are really humbled—that is their time to mock, despise, discomfit, and put to shame. The children of Israel fear: and Samuel does not tell them they do wrong by fearing. They say, 'Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us.' Thus you see coming in and mingling with their fears the hope that the Lord was their God still. Then Samuel offered 'a sucking lamb.' It seems a feeble preparation for battle, but there was that faith in the offering which works by love, and is made strong out of weakness. Other judges whom God had raised up to Israel had been men of war, such as Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, but Samuel was called upon to fight without any arms. The politic Philistines in his days, as we read in 1 Sam. xiii. 19, would not let Israel have even smiths among

them lest they should make swords; therefore the Lord will give them the victory without swords—'The Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them.' Now I suppose this was no miracle in the strict sense of the word: probably the Philistines said, 'We should have had a fine victory had it not been for the thunderstorm, but no man can fight against the elements.' They would not understand what had happened, but Israel did. Therefore Samuel took a stone and called it 'Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' Mark now his tenderness; he wishes them to look back and see the Lord's help, that they might look forward in hope and prayer to see the help again and again. So must we, by the Lord's help.

September 28, 1845.*

Isaiah xix. 19, 20, 'In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.'

This is a sweet and blessed promise made to many individuals in Egypt, who both under the Jewish and Christian dispensation have been truly converted to God, and possibly refers to a more signal benefit that nation may yet partake of in the appointed time. Let us indeed pray for them, yet not spend our time in discussing their condition, but seek to obtain light from the word of the Lord given them; as we may, and certainly shall, if the work of grace be in us; for, as Egypt stands generally in the word of God as the type of the church's enemy and the friend of the world, the text shadows forth to us that many who feel convicted of these sins shall convert and be healed; and it therefore encourages those who are under sore convictions to hope.

Indeed the whole chapter is instructive though awful. 'The burden of Egypt,' says the prophet, 'Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.' And then in many very awful particulars he sets forth that failing of their heart. It is no trifling matter when such things as these are felt or feared. It seems indeed as if the black prospect were for destruction, but I hope we shall be enabled to find refreshment and encouragement from considering that those very persons thus dealt with are the certain objects of the Lord's unchangeable love. And it follows, 'In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the land of Egypt.'

It does not appear possible to the tried heart, that the Lord will accept our worship in such a condition: but since we prove from

time to time that he does, and maintains the altar and the pillar, how good is it to keep stedfastly cleaving to the hope. For this very thing, as it follows in verse 20, shall be 'for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts,' for the encouragement of our faith, and for the remembrance of his covenant, i. e. to help us to remember it, for the Lord says that he himself will look upon the bow in the dark cloud, and well then may we do the same. 'They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors;' not be so daunted by the oppressors as to stifle their cry; this is what I most fear; but he secretly blesses the sad work of the oppressors against us, to lead to a more earnest cry. What are the oppressors? Sin and the devil, a fainting mistrusting heart, sloth and presumption, the plots and scorn of ungodly men: but one thing more, which is such an oppressor that without the power and grace of Jesus, it will sink every soul, and that one thing is the just displeasure and avenging curse of God. But 'he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them,' i. e. he shall send Jesus, discerned by faith, a great one indeed, yet when he took upon him to deliver man he did not abhor the virgin's womb. O turn to him lying in his swaddling bands, as weak as we are, that through weakness he might prevail. It sanctifies our fears through *our* weakness, to take a believing view of *his*.

Isaiah xix. 21–25, 'And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation: yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it,' &c.

Here we have a further description of the blessing of sanctified affliction. These Egyptians had been, I may say, brought to nothing in themselves through fear, confusion, the cloud, the shaking of the Lord's hand, and the scattering of all their imaginations. Now behold the fruit of it all, which did not appear at the time. The Lord shall reveal himself, and they shall know him. They shall return to him, he shall be entreated of them, and he shall heal them. Here is spiritual enlargement, love, and liberty; in a word, the gospel of peace; because, crying by reason of oppressors, the Saviour appears. Then also shall other Gentiles be brought in, even the Assyrians, and the Lord shall bless them both, and Israel amongst them, with the same divine blessing. These things must be considered, so that by God's grace we may, as I said in the morning, obtain light from the word given them; for this mercy bestowed on these humbled Egyptians is to show us that he will have mercy upon all such, those whom he brings low, and who because of the oppressors cry to him. Thus in seeking for the divine application of the promises, we continually get good from them—'exceeding great and precious promises,' says Peter, 'that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.'

September 20, 1846.

Revelations xxii. 1, 'And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.'

I DWELT upon the words, 'He showed me,' for though this was in open vision, yet there was the inward power of grace besides, which caused the apostle John to enter into the truth by faith, and to find strength and consolation in it. For faith will make us to realize this water of life now. I look upon it that the river denotes the life-giving influence of the Holy Ghost, therefore effectual because he is divine in every attribute, being very God; and the Father and the Son send him forth: and it says this grace proceeds from 'the throne,' to denote the dominion and power which the Lord puts forth in bringing this kingdom of grace to us. The pureness and the clearness as of crystal is to set forth the holiness. It is the only thing which creates the holy principle, and enables us to mortify every sin. Seeing this is truly so, and yet the unholy nature which fights against the grace is left in our hearts, except the doctrine of the mediation of Jesus Christ be distinctly held and discovered, this blessed subject cannot be consistently felt and believed.

Revelations xxii. 2–5, 'In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse,' &c.

THUS this beautiful description of the blessedness of heaven proceeds, the beginning of which we considered this morning. John is shown in the street of the new Jerusalem, and on either side of the river of the Lord's holy grace, the tree of life; the same which fallen man was kept from touching by the cherubim and the flaming sword, but recovered by Christ to his ransomed church; and it bears twelve manner of fruits—called twelve to denote fruit all through the year. This tree of life is even now by faith revealed and fed upon; and its twelve manner of fruits denote the variety of the graces of the Spirit, which must be found in us according to our state. Are we prosperous? there is joy, faith, and temperance. Are we oppressed? there is meekness and patience. Are we in communion? there is love and peace. Nay, the very leaves are for healing. The leaves come before the fruit. If you have not found the fruit, gather a leaf. Perhaps there is a wound in your heart or affections? a very simple cry to Christ may heal you.

The rest of the text furnishes a contrast between the final state of blessedness and the present state of trial. There, 'there shall be no more curse:' here, the curse keeps threatening. There, 'his ser-

vants shall serve him:' here, for a time we turn aside, and this brings woe. There, 'they shall see his face:' here, he often hides it. There, 'his name shall be on their foreheads:' here, we are too often ashamed of this, or bring disgrace on his name, which God forbid. There, 'they need no candle, neither light of the sun,' by reason of the surpassing glory of the Lord, 'and they shall reign for ever and ever.' Is not this glory enough? The Lord enable us to judge spiritually, and have respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Maney, *December* 9, 1846.

1 Corinthians xv. 36–39, 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body,' &c.

I OBSERVED that these words contain a comparison used often in scripture, and to illustrate different things. Here it is used to illustrate the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which some in the Corinthian church doubted; but it is also used to illustrate the state of Christ's living church upon earth, and the dispensations of God toward members of the same. In this sense it is used by our Lord himself in John xii. 24–27, wherein he refers to his own approaching death and burial, as the dying of the grain in the earth; and as this last must take place before the seed springs up and the harvest follows, so was the death of Christ, the life of his church. . . .

There is a little church by the mercy of God planted in this spot. It has been the offspring of many prayers, of some now gathered into the Lord's garner, and of others still living, yet the appearance is small, and the hindrances great and many. I know not what the Lord's purpose may be, and would caution all not to look for great things outwardly, but to be very earnest in prayer that however poor the appearance may be, there may be a rich harvest of living converts. This blessed work of God will be promoted, not hindered, by all the humiliation and poverty and trial of the members, provided these things are sanctified to urge them to Christ always, and to Christ only. It is by this faith in Christ that the death of the spiritual seed sown, turns to abundant life.

When the Lord Jesus speaks, as I have read in the 12th of John, he speedily turns the matter to that which is practical and personal, saying, 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.' Do we believe this? It is hard really to believe it. Many are very full of high stout faith, which they acknowledge to be in their own keeping; and it is just good for nothing. But I advise you, brethren, and myself also, to ask continually for faith which is God's gift, that we

may believe this mighty word of Jesus Christ, that by hating our life we shall keep it unto life eternal. The power of this will make us fixed, in earnest, single in eye and heart, not to go two ways, but as Jesus further says, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me:'—and which way did he go? right through the tribulation: so must we; for, adds the Lord, 'where I am, there shall also my servant be:' and, 'now is my soul troubled;' therefore do not think to escape this trouble of soul.

The comparison in the text, 'That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die,' may also be taken to illustrate the same point. Your prayers that live, will first die; your hopes that live, will first die. And when you sow, you sow not the body that shall be. For you sow in tears: you are convinced of sin; of ignorance, blindness, darkness, pride, and confusion. It is the confession of all this that you are sowing, and a very mean seed it looks like. But depend upon it you sow not the body that shall be: for 'God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him;' and the body he is pleased to give to this seed when it has sprung up, is the glory of Christ's righteousness; for 'he giveth to every seed his own body.' Remember that. So now if you nourish sin, if you nourish pride, an evil eye, a worldly spirit, a double mind, a going two ways, prejudice, enmity, or the like, i. e. if instead of confessing all these things you are arguing with the reproof, and the light that makes the evil manifest, and so turn away, then know you are sowing a bad seed, and God will give it its own body, and these evils will be confirmed. Wherefore let each take heed to his spirit.

April 30, 1848.

2 Timothy ii. 19, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'

It is manifest that the church of Christ in that day was afflicted, as we are, by the instability of many professors of God's truth; and therefore we are furnished with many needful cautions in this chapter, as, for instance, not to strive about words to no profit, but tending only to subversion. All questions the discussing of which either feeds temptation, or diverts us from heart work, are of this nature: and though the evil seems small at first, 'they will increase unto more ungodliness: and their word will eat as doth a canker.' In the midst of these things the apostle says to all who are exercised with them, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure.' I enlarged on the doctrine of the text,—that Christ is the only sure and certain foundation, which can never be removed. Has not this 'Nevertheless' sometimes come in to help and encourage your hearts in the midst of temptations? All our fears and temptations turn to

us rather as testimonies than prove subverting to us, when this foundation appears, to which they have vehemently driven us.

The apostle sets forth this foundation, as it were, sealed; and the engraving of the seals thereof as follows: 1st, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his.' And 2nd, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' With respect to the first seal, mark the difference it establishes between us and the Lord. It says, 'The Lord knoweth:' we do not know. The Lord knows his own chosen and redeemed ones, he knows them, and will surely search them out, effectually call them, deliver them from all enemies, and bring them back from their wanderings. The power of this truth is felt when it comes to us in our weakness and fears, and sets us to pray and cry with hope for the Lord's mercy. The second seal is no less needful. These redeemed ones, being brought to feel God's word with power, will be ever on the watch to depart from iniquity; not from conviction, humiliation, the cross, and tribulation, but from iniquity. Even before they know their adoption, when they only name Christ's name, these true and right believers will be thus aiming to walk. Knowledge, wisdom, power, and strength belong not to them, but to the Lord, but this labour in the Lord belongs to them,—they are ever departing from iniquity.

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2 Timothy ii. 19-21, '. . . But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.'

I WENT on with my morning's discourse, dwelling a little more upon the two seals of the foundation of Christ Jesus, and then proceeded to the apostle's illustration. It is a circumstance well known that in every great house there are needed common and mean vessels as well as valuable ones: so it is in Christ's church on earth. Let no one, therefore, be satisfied with his state because he is joined in outward communion with the purest church on earth; for he may be only an earthen vessel there, useful to others for a while, and then to be broken and thrown away. Now we may see from the text how to distinguish between vessel and vessel, for we may know the vessels of honour thus,—they are those members of the church who 'purge themselves' from all the errors, snares, bad practices, and sins which abound in others. These have life, even Christ the life, to control all their exertions; and this grace is very active, vigorous, and practical. In that he says these 'purge themselves,' he intends to show us that they are polluted, even as others, before this purging takes place. You will perceive this purging in the deep and feeling sense they have of their great need of purging: others will tell you they have only a few spots, and easily taken out; but

these, being the subjects of true conviction, are in earnest to purge themselves by faith in the 'fountain opened.' I will illustrate this purging, by considering the real hatred to the sins detected and pardoned, as set forth by Joshua's charge to the Israelites to put their feet on the necks of the devoted kings. So, if this purging be real, you will deal with the king of pride, the king of anger, the king of malice, and all other reigning sins in your hearts: and your delight will be thus to humble and abase yourselves; not saying with Saul, 'I have sinned, yet honour me now,' which shows no purging at all; but falling down before the Lord, like David, and so looking to the Lord to lift you up.

October 22, 1848. *

Hebrews ii. 10, 'For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.'

I BEGAN by testifying the necessity of the teaching of the Holy Spirit to show us that things really are as God's word represents them. That these are not empty words, but real truths; even that the ever-blessed God made all things for and by himself; and had this purpose from the beginning, out of a lost world to bring many sons to glory, by sovereign grace, through the mediator Jesus Christ. That this is the way, and the only way, in which all who are saved shall be saved. That this eternal mediator was in nature one with God, but became also one with us, and therefore a fit Person to be resorted to, and trusted in, by us, in all distresses, convictions, weakness, fears, and temptations. He himself conquered by weakness, and therefore we need not expect, seeing we must follow him, that we can escape the tribulation. Our hearts being penetrated by the light of grace, our only refuge is continually to beg Christ to cover our sin, and be our righteousness; and though we should be greatly cast down, there is a lifting up, a glory, a sweetness, a liberty, and a strength in this way of the humbling cross, which cannot be uttered.

November 19, 1848.

Numbers x. 33, 'And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.'

I FEEL myself unable to expound fully the great subject brought before us in the text, but I hope to be able to do so in part, knowing that it is one of the most consoling as well as instructive which we can dwell upon. For the church of God now upon earth is pass-

ing through a spiritual wilderness, set forth in type by the wilderness through which the Israelites passed from Egypt to Canaan: and all things which God did for them outwardly must spiritually be done for us, if by regeneration we become members of the true church. Our present point is to speak of the cloud and the ark, as they are both combined in the text and elsewhere. For it is said that the Lord went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, and took not these away. And when the ark was prepared, which set forth his favour as reconciled in Christ, the ark followed the cloud.

The cloudy and fiery pillar denote the manner of the Lord's guiding and directing his people, either by a shadow of defence, or light by night, as their present case requires. It is only by faith of the Lord's operation that this in the real and undoubted truth of it is discerned. If we would know how we must discover this cloud, it is by a real fulfilling in our hearts of the apostle Paul's words, 'Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.' You and I will neither understand nor believe in the ark and cloudy pillar, as a practical blessing to ourselves, except through this self-renunciation which, bringing us to seek first Christ's kingdom and righteousness, makes us give up our reputation, comfort, property, or even life, if needful, in this absorbing object—following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Each of us will then become poor, needy, simple, dependent, not expecting to be able by wisdom to guide himself, but only praying with David, 'O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me.'

In the hearts of all such God's word is fulfilled in a wonderful manner. They are brought to understand the bondage of Egypt; the deliverance by Moses, to whom the people listened not at first because of cruel bondage; the passage of the Red Sea which was attained by faith, while the presumptuous Egyptians were drowned in following; the entrance into the desert; the voice of God on mount Sinai; the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices, which was followed by the discovery of God in peace; the sins of Israel; their long waitings; the cloud resting on the tabernacle; their journeying when it was taken up, either by day or night; and the beautiful power of the text,—the ark went before them to search out a resting place for them.

Respecting this resting place, we must be brought to understand it as the apostle Paul explains it in Hebrews iii and iv. It is a rest which remaineth for the people of God. It is entered into by believing, i. e. by the faith of God's power. It reveals Christ a perfect and complete, absolute and eternal Saviour, who says, 'It is finished,' and puts an end to the law and all its demands as a covenant of works to us. So the believer ceaseth 'from his own works, as God did from his.' It is the sweetest and most excellent benefit which we can possibly attain on earth, even heaven upon

earth, yet only revealed to faith. In respect to our own feelings it is as transient and changeable as the resting places were, which the ark of God found for the church in the desert. If the flesh begins to take advantage of this holy rest, the word is, 'Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction;' and we have to fight, and not sleep.

I sought for a place in scripture which should describe this rest fully, and found it in Solomon's Song iii. 6–11. Who is this church coming out of the wilderness (as seen in chapter viii. 5, leaning upon her beloved Christ) here seen as perfumed with the smoke and incense of Christ's merits and intercession, and the Holy Spirit's supplications? Behold the bed, the resting place, which is Christ's; it is surrounded by an armed host, because of fear in the night; the men of war prevailing with God are about it. The king has made it himself. It is as a chariot to carry them through the desert; its pillars are silver, its floor is gold, its covering is purple, it is filled with his love to his church. Go forth ye wise virgins, from all your sins and entanglements and darkness; go forth, and behold the king in his beauty, behold him crowned with the crown wherewith all the generations of his church who are gone before you, whom he calls his mother, have already crowned him.

Now we must understand that the attaining of these things through faith is the rest here spoken of as searched out by the ark of God. This rest can never be reached by those who walk in a legal spirit, who follow their own spirit, who trust in their own wisdom. It is found by patient abiding through all temptations, convictions, and fears, looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is found not once only, but it is our continual labour in the Lord to find it always. It is found, according to the due measure, in all particular trials, when we really find them issued in the Lord's light and favour. Even in all outward matters, when we truly seek the Lord's will, as knowing the importance of every step we take in its bearing on our spiritual interest, when the Lord himself guides us, as guide us he will, and brings us through the trials in the right way, then are we borne as in this chariot through the wilderness. And the finding of this is such a strength to us that it enables us to strengthen our brethren also, the Lord so honours this spiritual waiting on him.

December 31, 1848.

Matthew xxviii. 18–20, 'And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.'

It is truly blessed to feel the power of these words, when the

Lord Jesus is pleased to show his strength in us, according to his promise here, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Therefore when faith comes we look out for him, even in dark times and dispensations; and though we feel ourselves unable to do anything, what does that signify when the Lord really comes and does all? He came to his first ministers just before his ascension, and in the midst of their doubtings, and said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' This, rightly discerned, is the very corner-stone of our hope. We have no power, he has all; and therefore 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob.' In the faith of this word he sends them out to preach everywhere, without any restriction. I am sure a real minister who finds Christ's commission, (and without it there is no true minister on earth,) feels all his strength to preach, all his hope of success, to lie in this point. For Christ says, 'Go ye THEREFORE, teach (or, as the word in the margin is, *disciple*) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

Now though I believe that when the Lord said baptize, he meant to establish the outward ordinance of baptism with water in the name of the Triune God, and therefore we must obey him; yet, let no one suppose that the words reach no further than the outward sign. The ministers of Christ, themselves brought into the depths of spiritual truth, must through grace embue their hearers with the same. They must set forth the power of this great name which is called upon us. Their hearers, whom God hath quickened, must find the discovery of this great God manifested by faith: the eternal love and powerful drawing of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. It is in this sense the great work and labour of a minister's life, to enter into these things, and through Christ's power to lead his hearers into them. And the outward ordinances of baptism and the supper of the Lord are blessed means of grace when rightly dispensed. I am a witness, and speak it boldly, of the advantage and encouragement which may be found and felt in attending as we now do upon this ordinance of baptism,—for it sets forth the gracious good-will of God to sinners, it shadows forth his divine power in making all his saints new-born babes in Christ, and it teaches us the necessity of the true spiritual washing for all who are saved, whether young or old. And this encourages faith and prayer. For did the Lord ordain the sign of all this grace, and will he deny the substance? Does he shine upon us even in baptizing outwardly, and will he frown upon us in asking these blessings which baptism is the figure of? Let us not despise his holy ordinance as a trifle; nor yet, which is worse still, exalt the ordinance as if it were the substance of grace.

The Lord give us grace to do all things which he has commanded in the assured faith of the promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;' and therefore this day; as I can truly say I have found him to be. Amen.

February 23, 1849. *

Mark vi. 30, 31, 'And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.'

I FIND this a great mercy, to be enabled to come thus unto Christ, the Son of God and of man, believing that favour and acceptance come to us through him alone. Confessing to him our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and presenting his blood and righteousness as our shield, I find that he does not upbraid, but encourages us to press forward, and becomes our Saviour and our Teacher. We cannot confess these evils to the holy God except through this blessed mediator Christ; but all believers, and especially all ministers, must gather together to him, and acknowledge all they have done and taught. And when they give account they have reason to be ashamed indeed. But let us deeply attend to his word. For he says often at such times, Go privately into a desert place and rest; and a desert we then find our souls, our prospects, our ministry, and all. Here we must rest, i. e. entreat his mercy to unfold the word in our own hearts. What is the use of that beautiful chapter I have read to you, Hebrews xii, except it be unfolded and fulfilled in us?—the stedfast looking to Jesus; the patient abiding in the affliction under the chastening hand of God; the coming through Sinai to Zion, to the communion of the saved church, to God the Judge of all, and to the blood of sprinkling; also the finding that reverence and godly fear whereby only we can truly serve God. These things have been connected in my own mind with the withdrawing into the desert place, where Christ is: not into a desert without him. If we expect profit in a Christless desert, we are only deluded papists.

June 24, 1849. *

Lamentations ii. 1, 'How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger.'

THE plan of my sermon was to consider, 1st, the particulars of the text, showing how they are fulfilled in our experience: sometimes by sudden changes, which last for a short time only; at other times by a series of outward and inward trials very distressing, yet by the overruling mercy of God made very profitable for our humiliation. I described the cloud, the casting down, the remembering not. 2nd, I endeavoured to draw some encouraging considerations from these trying words, which the analogy of faith enables us to do: 1. It is 'the daughter of Zion' which is covered with the cloud, and though by reason of the cloud she fears, yet the Lord has said

of Zion, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' 2. 'The beauty of Israel,' though cast to the earth, is not destroyed. 3. The Lord forgets 'his footstool' for a day, yet will he make the place of his feet glorious. 3rd, I endeavoured to press these truths practically, to show the humbling effects of sanctified trials, which most of all the spiritual man covets. So Jeremiah himself longed for these peaceable fruits, and says, 'O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger lest thou bring me to nothing.'

January 27, 1850.*

1 Timothy iii. 14, 15, 'These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.'

This subject has two branches. The first which I will treat is the one which stands last in the text, viz. the description here given of the church or house of God. This church is the assembly of all believers in all places and ages, and every collective part of it is a smaller assembly of the same body. Except we have this view of the church, we fall into no end of human errors. The greatness of this assembly (not in respect of numbers but dignity) is not from any greatness in the persons; they are poor, mean, destitute, guilty sinners; but their greatness is this,—the Lord hath made himself one with them, and taken them to be his own members. He proves himself to be the living God amongst them, and therefore they are called 'the church of the living God.' For he gives them life, by which they are enabled to discern, know, fear, and love him, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This church is 'the pillar and ground (i. e. the stay) of the truth' upon the earth. The power of the truth, as really influentially taught of God, is confined wholly to these. And they are brought not only to know but also to love the truth—cordially to love it—they could not live without it.

The second branch of the subject is the caution given to Timothy, 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.' Let us consider how great this house is. In Heb. xi and Rev. vii, we have some account of it. There we see how all our fathers in the faith have been tried, and how they came out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is the great body to which we also belong, if so be the Lord has really quickened our souls. The dealings of the Lord with us, as a very small section of this great body, have a certain relation to the whole body: we cannot therefore judge of them, they are too high and on a scale too great for our

narrow comprehension. Oh that a right view and feeling of this may humble and meeken our spirits, lead us to be patient in trials, not to murmur, not to pity ourselves, not to be conceited, but to pray and adore! Some complain of their great trials. Are they tried like Abraham, when the Lord commanded him to slay his son of promise? or like Jacob, when God said, Return home, and then came forth as an adversary and wrestled with him all night? or as Joseph, who, because he acted in God's holy fear, was robbed of his character, liberty and all through the lies of a wicked woman? or than the church of God, 'of whom,' says the Holy Ghost, 'the world was not worthy,' who were yet destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandering in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth? A right feeling of all these things will teach us to behave ourselves meekly, patiently, tenderly in the house of God; and that is the right way.

February 19, 1850.

Psalm cxxvii. 1, 2, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.'

I CONSIDERED first what a maul these words are upon all religion in the flesh. Every spirit is rejected by these words except the spirit which most truly and cordially feels the power of this truth, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' I then spoke of the great breadth of this holy word—how it reaches to us; how it speaks to us as spiritual labourers, to build up ourselves as lively stones upon the rock Christ Jesus, and it says, The will, power, and grace of the Lord must always prevent us, that we may be so built up indeed; how it speaks to every minister of Christ, labouring in the word and doctrine, and says to each of them, Except, like Paul of old, you are 'workers together with God,' your work and labour is vain; how it speaks to every ruler of a kingdom, or ruler of a household, and says, Except the Lord is really first, secretly to manage all, except you really mortify all pride and self-wisdom (which none can do but quickened believers) all your schemes and policy will be utterly ruined. It is in the last way especially that Luther treats this Psalm, and with wonderful effect. Well is it with those who can understand the spiritual line he draws, showing how we must labour, and must watch, and must be diligent, and must use all appointed means, and yet be continually humbled and as it were brought to nothing, trusting in the living God. In the second verse of my text a distinction is drawn, 'It is vain for you to rise up early,' &c., i. e. it is vain for *you* to do so who have no real faith, but depend on your works. For if you have faith, and are so beloved of the Lord, he will give you sleep, i. e. rest, even Christ and his benefits, and then your labour in the Lord is not vain.

March 2, 1851.

Psalm x. 16–18, 'The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.'

Here David rises out of great tribulation, as we may see by reading this whole Psalm. We may be assured that the peculiar trials he describes through the oppression of the spirits of men are likely in great variety to be our portion also, and at times we have really felt this. We must also always remember the oppression of the man of sin within us; whereby we are verily and indeed made to cry, 'O wretched man that I am!' This evil man has no faith in him; therefore he browbeats the tender faith which is of the Spirit's operation, saying in our hearts, 'The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard.' Because of all these things we are obliged to cry, 'Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?' Mark the words. The Lord is 'a very present help in trouble' (Psalm xlvi. 1); but sometimes it appears otherwise, and this is a real heart-searching trial that requires all the faith we can find to bear up under it. Howbeit, to those who wait upon the Lord, as David did, the trial shall come at last to the conclusion his came to in the text, 'The Lord is King for ever.' I had unbelievingly doubted this, but I find it was certainly true. He orders all things, and brings good out of evil. 'The heathen are perished out of *his* land.' All the ignorance and unbelief of my heart is perished. For 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble,' though for a time I thought thou heardest not: 'thou wilt prepare their heart;' even the trials and afflictions prepare their heart for grace: 'thou wilt cause thine ear to hear;' they shall yet have occasion to pray, and thou wilt answer them. Use the best weapon in the Christian's armoury: 'pray without ceasing.'

May 11, 1851.

Psalm cvi. 43–45, 'Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: and he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.'

I feel a hope indeed that the Lord fulfilled the words in me before I spoke from them, by suffering me to feel empty, void, and waste, and at the time of preaching gave me strength to handle these words.

If it were not for the Lord's effectual deliverances many times repeated, yea, and to be looked for many times more, we could not be saved. Temporal deliverances are his gift, but not his saving

gift; we must improve them by finding encouragement from them to ask him for spiritual deliverances. When sin has carried us captive, and we are hard, wayward, and stubborn, then we are sorely chained and enslaved: and many a time must the Lord come unto us in this state; for though there is a cry against ourselves (i. e. against our fleshly desires) for his Holy Spirit, yet we make no way till he break down the stubborn will, and then, behold, we are already delivered; all our desires are then satisfied. He causes us to love his way, his people, and his word, and to give up our own will. And this grace and mercy in the Lord must be preached, that his people may find their faith strengthened in time of temptation. For though their iniquity brings them low, yet is it written, '*Nevertheless* he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry.' It is not said, He regarded their pure motives, their holy humility, or any other good thing in them; but, says the text, 'their affliction;' howbeit, not without their crying. And his regard for them it is which enables them to bring forth any good thing in his sight. He remembered his covenant, which is free grace to miserable sinners through Christ. That is all their salvation.

July 17, 1851.*

Hosea iv. 16, 'For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.'

I SAID I had often thought in reading the many detached passages of this prophet's writings, that he had been commissioned by God very often to set down just the heads and topics of his more enlarged addresses. Each one is a mine of gold, if the Holy Spirit will graciously open it. Here is the state of the whole church, and every individual therein, described,—'Israel slideth back.' This is the continual property of the sin that dwells in us. God forbid that we should take a fleshly encouragement from dwelling on this sad truth. I then enlarged very fully upon the essential truth of the co-existence of Spirit and flesh in every renewed believer; and was thus brought to the consideration of the last clause, 'Now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.' There is something in experience, even godly repentance, which intervenes between the backsliding and this feeding. But what a gracious gospel is this! I was enabled to dwell much upon the 'large place.'

February 8, 1852.

Jeremiah l. 4, 5, 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.'

I HOPE we shall have reason to bless the Lord that ever he was pleased to ordain so blessed a description to be written of the way of life, as my text is, that ever he should say this shall take place; even in that day, which is an evil day, and when the power of Babylon (all false religion) has broken the bones of Israel (the true church); yet shall the children of Israel and of Judah 'together' go the right way. These had been at variance; Israel had envied Judah, and Judah vexed Israel; yet now they go together, 'going and weeping.' This weeping is the power of the broken heart and contrite spirit, which all false professors leave out. They confound it with bondage of spirit: God forbid we should. This weeping is because of our sin, and the sin of others; and, above all, this weeping is because of Christ, whom we have pierced with all our foolish vain sins and our contentions. They shall go with weeping. Again he says, 'They SHALL go;' as much as if he said, Nothing shall hinder them; not all the temptations, or stumbling-blocks that can be cast in their way, shall hinder this pressing on. They 'shall seek the Lord their God.' This lively seeking is the sum of all spiritual religion; it is the seeking of the Lord, not of themselves, not their own honour, not their own ease. It is a seeking of the real teaching, the teaching of the Spirit, to guide into all truth. It is a seeking of Christ, in the power of his arm, the love of his heart, the glory of his justifying righteousness, the efficacy of his cleansing blood, the prevalency of his saving intercession. It is a seeking of the Father's eternal love, free gift, free promise, and his divine adoption. 'They shall ask the way to Zion.' They shall not be wise in their own eyes, they shall not be like them who say, 'We see;' and whose sin therefore remaineth (John ix. 41). They shall not be above instruction, above ordinances, above the Lord's appointed means. Their faces shall be 'thitherward,' i. e. heavenward. A man who is tender, humble, earnest, loving is thus looking the right way; but the contentious, the proud, and the bitter are looking the wrong way. 'Come,' they shall say, 'let us join ourselves to the Lord.' Their whole souls are seeking first the kingdom, and therefore they invite others also to seek the same with them. The glorious privilege of unity with Christ, the blessing of the everlasting covenant, which is never to be forgotten, never, no not even in the time of temptation; these are the objects upon which their heart is set; this is the unity they are always longing to promote. Go thou and do likewise. Amen.

April 9, 1852.

Galatians vi. 14, 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'

I CONSIDERED from the two previous verses the vanity and deception of the zeal for externals of religion, such as is too common now-a-days as well as then; and we are in danger of it except the Lord have mercy, and grant us the spiritual mind which 'is life and peace.' I then considered the words of the text as a fervent prayer. 'God forbid,' let it by no means be! O Lord, hinder me from ever glorying in anything except in Christ—either in an arm of flesh, or in myself, in my faith, religion, zeal, good works, prayers, or anything really or only supposed to be good. For if really good, Christ is the sole author and foundation of it; if only supposed to be good, Christ must be the sin offering to atone for it. The real power of the apostle's words is the strongest possible declaration of the danger and guilt of all self-righteousness. The ground of glorying proposed is 'the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,' i. e. from a real feeling and deep sense of the necessity of his death and sufferings, though this feeling and deep sense brings us low, as wretched helpless sinners, and obliges us also to take up our cross and follow him. This twofold effect of the cross is insisted upon: it makes the world as crucified to me, and me as crucified to the world. Take notice of both these effects, and they set forth the life of a true believer, filled with a joy and love and peace, which makes this world to him vanity and vexation of spirit, and yet despised and hated in the world as a visionary, a fool, or a deceiver. Who can reach the depth and height of these words?

February 27, 1853.

Isaiah xl. 9-11, 'O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.'

O YE ransomed of the Lord, who have tasted and seen that he is gracious, from the low pit of humiliation ascend the mountain of thanksgiving, and made strong out of weakness testify that Christ the lowly Saviour is the Lord God. Tell of the strong power of his hand in subduing your sins and enemies; of his dominion through grace; of the work within which prepares the heart for his coming; and of the reward of his love which he brings with him. Set forth his tender feeding of his flock; how he makes you lowly, and then bears you in his bosom; how gentle his dealings are with those who labour to bring forth the spiritual fruits of grace!

June 19, 1853.

Matthew xv. 29-31, 'And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.'

I HAD felt the last part of Isaiah ix very trying to me in the night, dwelling upon these words, 'For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.' Nevertheless the testimony in the former part of the chapter, respecting the kingdom of Christ, gave me some encouragement; and it was in this state that I found the words of the text, which I trust had power from the Lord to raise me from a most trying state of unbelief to consider the unchangeable almighty power of Jesus. I endeavoured to set him forth in the ministry as exalted on the mountain, and all varieties of needy objects before him, some blind, some dumb, some deaf, some maimed: and he healed them all. This speaks comfortably to such as painfully feel their spiritual blindness, often dumb under the oppression of temptation, having their ear sealed up from hearing the word, and having been in conflict they have come off maimed and mutilated rather than like conquerors: one in the battle has his hope smitten down, another is defiled by envy or enmity, another knows he has fretted against the Lord. Behold now it is thus we must come and spread our cases before the Lord Jesus: the healing by his hand must pass upon us before we can be whole. Beware, whatever you do or leave undone, that you leave not out this lively faith, nor make it a secondary point. It is and must be ever the first point, the most needful. He that finds its efficacy will wonder at it, as the multitude did. What! shall such maimed ones as we are be verily healed; such dumb ones, speak; and all through faith! This brings glory to the God of Israel. Yea, this is the Lord's express design, to glorify his great name through Jesus Christ.

December 25, 1853.

2 Corinthians ix. 15, 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.'

I BEGAN at the 6th verse of the chapter of the text; and showed the liberality and bounty of Christians as emanating from the Lord's grace. I then considered this especial gift of God, which is certainly Christ. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now the apostle's heart melts to think of it. He is commending liberality, but he is lost in the contemplation

of the Lord's liberality, to which the subject led him. Why is this gift called 'unspeakable?' Let the convinced, alarmed sinner answer that question: others cannot. O what a gift is this! 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' Yet how differently men esteem this gift. Our ruined, dark, selfish nature knows and cares nothing about it, till sovereign mercy awaken us, and behold, this gift is true! Wherefore, O Lord, let the praise break forth, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.'

January 1, 1854. *

Leviticus xxv. 9, 10, 'Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.'

I BEGAN by remarking that these words have doubtless refreshed numbers of the Lord's true people, in all ages of the Jewish and Christian church, as setting forth in lively type the everlasting gospel which is all their salvation and all their desire. We do not want a conceited curious spirit to dive into deep points, or to bring forward fanciful interpretations of scripture—the Lord sweep all that out of our hearts, and give us grace to seek after the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. As here, to dwell upon the glorious truths shadowed in these words, and to pray that a deeper entrance into them may mark the beginning, progress, and end of the present year. This jubile of liberty is really freedom from the power and yoke of sin, from the bondage of the broken law, and all spiritual enemies, only and always through Christ. I described the day of atonement, and the excellency of the precept that on this self-same day the trumpet was to sound and the liberty be proclaimed. I dwelt also on the many captivities and bondages of God's true children; but when this liberty is proclaimed, we return to our own possession.

February 9, 1855.

Isaiah lvii. 15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'

THE wonder and excellency of the truth of this lies herein, that in these two very different places, the high and holy place on the

one hand, and the contrite humble heart on the other hand, Almighty God should dwell.

We shall better understand how this is so, if we consider a little what this contrite humble spirit really implies, even the possession of that which is wrought of God, and therefore, surely, where it is, there also is the Lord whose presence forms it. Are we naturally contrite and humble? Not at all. As long as we continue in our natural darkness and ignorance the greater part of us are in ease and self-security, thinking and knowing nothing about the Lord. In such a state we may perhaps, as many do, fancy ourselves sufficiently humble: for we are well in our own conceit, and hope we are so in God's judgment also. Howbeit his judgment of us is far otherwise. He says we are guilty sinners, worthy only of everlasting perdition; and that all who continue in their natural state shall without doubt perish everlastingly. Do we naturally see the ground of this judgment so as practically to believe it? No, by no means. But as surely as ever this testimony begins to enter, and to gain ground in our hearts, our pride rises up against it; we are at deadly enmity against the holy law, which refuses to abate one jot of this severe judgment. This is the irritating, inflaming power of the broken law; 'The law worketh wrath;' the law revealeth sin, for 'By the law is the knowledge of sin.'

Here all are brought; and here we should all perish, were it not for the way the Lord has condescended to take. He sent forth his Son in our nature, to believe and live, suffer and die, not only humble, but in the fullest sense contrite also: made so, not for sin of his own, for he had none, but because our sin was imputed to him. He submitted to the holy law to the utmost, he endured its bitter penalty and curse for the sins of proud sinners of mankind. This is he who says in the chapter I read to you this evening, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' You see he will have them dwell with him. 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' If, says Christ, you learn of me meekness and lowliness, you shall find the rest: if your spirits become contrite and humble I will dwell with you. This is the fountain of all salvation to us. If you and I be not enabled by divine faith to receive this, and from this fountain to draw all our hope, we never can be humbled, the innate pride of our nature will never be cast out, and the spirit of meekness work in our hearts. We can never humble ourselves. This humbling of Christ must prove our humbling. This is the scriptural direction to us in prayer. It is for this Christ, the hope of glory, we must pray—pray to know him, to believe in him, to shelter our souls under him: and those who thus pray from their hearts, have the spirit of prayer, and shall prevail. And what then? Why the Lord is with them. His right hand and holy arm hath gotten him this victory. Thus wherever throughout the whole earth a contrite

and humble heart is, there also is the great Lord who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, dwelling there.

August 3, 1855.*

Isaiah ix. 13, 'For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.'

If we examine the chapter which contains these words we find (verses 6, 7) a most divine prophecy of Christ, as at once 'child' and 'son,' 'The Mighty God,' and 'The everlasting Father;' which last name is not to be taken as confounding his Person with the Person of the Father, but as declaring that Christ (as the whole Godhead is) is the spiritual Father of the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated church.

After these glorious words the prophet sets forth the outward judgments which lighted on the Israel of his day for their sins, 'The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind,' devouring them as with open mouth: and in the text he declares that in this trouble they turned not to their correcting God, nor sought the Lord of hosts. They were like us, and such are all men as far as ever they are left to themselves: wherefore, if you and I find profit from the reproof of this word, to do better, know it is of grace. Now seeing, as the prophet says, the Lord's 'anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still,' one would suppose, according to reason, that this was to drive them away for ever, and to keep them from seeking him: for who would seek consuming fire? But, behold, the very reverse is true! The Lord's continued displeasure is because they do not turn to him, and do not seek him.

Know now what this means. It means something which you and I can never avail ourselves of by all our strivings, but if we are enabled to fall down prostrate before Christ, as lost sinners, we shall certainly find it: even the eternal love to sinners which, through Christ, the Lord God has in himself to give them. Ask for this. Be sure you slip not from this gospel point. I do not say it is in your own power to find the profit of it, but if you feel your need of it, that it is precious, and you love it, and ask for it, God will give it you. The turning to him that smiteth is the fulfilment of Heb. xii. 5, 6. The seeking the Lord shows that he appears far off and absent. All these things are easily understood in the letter of them, but the finding of them, the groaning under the unbelief and pride of our wicked hearts, the being brought down to feel ourselves lost and ruined sinners, the contrite and broken heart, make all these things difficult to the Lord's awakened family, yet blessed, and only to them a blessing.

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August 8, 1856.

Ephesians ii. 14–18, 'For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'

It is well known that the apostle in these words treats of the division between Jew and Gentile, which is done away in Christ. We ourselves are not much affected by this matter, but in the primitive church it was a question of great importance. The Jews who believed in Jesus were still loath to forego their exclusive privileges; and the simplicity of their faith was often greatly vitiated by their reverence for the ritual law: for they would fain have trusted in their obedience to it, and often pressed it upon the Gentile converts, instead of finding and exhorting the Gentiles to find Christ to be all in all. In the 21st of Acts, which I have just read, we see the trouble which this contest brought into the church.... Think for a moment now what the trouble of all these things must have been. How it must have rent the church by schisms, and separated even good men who ought to have been one in heart. It was through these conflicting scenes that the Lord in those days purified and refined his afflicted people. Now though these disputes about Jew and Gentile in process of time melted away; yet, in every successive age, similar matters have arisen and rent the church by storms. Even in the age of the Reformation, the dogma of consubstantiation to which Luther adhered rent many churches and Christians asunder. In England, but most especially in Scotland, disputes about church government have had the same grievous effect. In own own day these same disputes, and the bitter disputings between baptists and pedo-baptists, have just the same effect. It is plain therefore that we all of us, as well as those to whom the apostle wrote, require to be made right, and kept right, by the power of the truths declared in my text being continually applied to us.

The apostle in my text speaks to those who can understand him. The circumcised in heart, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, surely will understand him well. Is not Christ our great peacemaker? True and saving religion springs from that faith which finds him to be so. What are all the disputings about outward points, ceremonies, ordinances, or modes of worship, to us? If the finding of Christ, the efficacy of his blood, the shelter of his obedience, the strength of his intercession, the power of his love, be not infinitely more than all those outward things to us, we are at once shown to be in the wrong state. Who and where are they who find with us this absolute need of Christ—

of the application of his power and love to our souls? Such are certainly those whom Christ makes ONE. Paul in my text, out of a full heart, describes what he felt and knew, to those who felt and knew with him. In this divine exercise of soul he and they felt the sweetest unity. In this race Jews and Gentiles running together ceased all their disputings and heart-burnings. Christ hath removed the enmity, taken away the curse. We have gone to him with a conscience laden with guilt, and through faith found the guilt removed, and the peace and love of the Father shed abroad. He hath reconciled both and all these contending parties to God;—that is the great peacemaking. All who are engaged in looking after and proving this divine way of life are friends and brethren indeed. This is the constant way of all saints, and by this you shall know whether they be saints or not. Neither Jews nor Gentiles can be right or safe any other way. Through Christ both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Here in few words is the whole essence of the gospel declared. It is the looking for and finding this access to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. Nothing else in religion is of the least value, if this be not pursued and found. Here is the power of the holy doctrine of the Trinity, the fountain of all the doctrines of grace. Those who are occupied in trading for this merchandise of Christ all their lives long, will love one another, and their unity will be the unity of brethren indeed, good and pleasant to behold.

June 12, 1857.

Matthew iv. 12–17, 'Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

HERE is one of the Lord's mysterious providences: who shall dare to say unto him, What doest thou? He suffered John to be imprisoned in the prime of his days and usefulness, and soon after, as we know, beheaded, by Herod and his wicked wife. This seemed a sore blow to the church of God; but at that time Jesus came forth, and preached in Galilee, fulfilling Isaiah's words, 'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. . . . The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.' Now if we look into Isaiah ix, we find there is an obscurity in the first verse, caused by translating the word 'weight of affliction,' instead of 'weight of glory;' for it should be, 'At first he abased, afterwards he glorified the way of the sea;' seeing Isaiah certainly said what the apostle Matthew intimates

that he said. It was a favour and blessing to the district where Zebulun and Naphtali had been, that Christ went and published his gospel there. Isaiah also shows us that he felt for himself the greatness of this favour, for, having denounced woes and desolation in the end of the 8th chapter, in this 9th chapter, verses 1–7, he prophesies of Christ's kingdom, and sees the great light of it himself, so that he cries out in verse 6, 'Unto us a child is born!'

Christ really was, and at that time proved himself to be, this great light in all who received his doctrine by grace. Many of the apostles, especially Peter and Andrew, James and John, and we need not doubt many disciples with them, really found the scripture fulfilled in their heart, 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.' The bulk of the Galileans and the inhabitants of Capernaum saw not that light, or rather saw it and abode in darkness; but their blindness hindered not the light from shining in others. We read in Luke v, a more particular account of this light shining into Peter's soul, which made him abase himself in the dust before Jesus. The entrance of this light is true religion, and without it there is no true religion. The words of the prophecy express the work of grace well. Here are blind and dark sinners; they know not the light; but the light comes down to them. They 'sit in darkness;' this betokens continuance in a bad condition, yea, in the land of 'the shadow of death,' which is awful, with God's wrath on their conscience; but, behold, the light breaks in! This light is Christ, and the entrance of it is a living hope, enabling the soul to say, 'I will look for the Lord, and wait until that he have mercy upon me.' Let all know that only by Christ coming to them, not by the merit of their coming to Christ, the light begins to dawn. The Lord Jesus when he comes preaches a pure and heavenly gospel: he calls to repentance indeed, but it is because the kingdom of grace is ushered in.

June 28, 1857.

Hebrews xiii. 20, 21, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

These words had entered my heart and been helpful to stir up faith throughout the preceding day, and I felt encouraged to take them for my morning text.

1st. I endeavoured to bring them home to our own case, by setting forth some of the afflictions, snares, discouragements, and prejudices by which many of the Hebrews addressed were evidently oppressed: therefore let not us sink in heart because of our own trials, which

are by no means greater than theirs. 2nd. I considered the prayer of the text clause by clause. There is nothing needful between this prayer and its fulfilment in ourselves, but the heavenly gift of faith: those of us who are plagued by unbelief, are the very persons called to stedfastness in thus praying. (1) Here is the Lord's high title, 'the God of peace:' because Christ has made peace by the blood of his cross. (2) Christ was raised from death: you cannot be lower than dead. Faith in Christ's bringing up alone can bring you up, and will. (3) Consider him as the great Shepherd: take comfort here, that the government is on his shoulder. (4) Consider his atoning blood, by which the eternal covenant is sealed. It must be the spring and rise of your holiness, as well as of your justification. No good works are perfect, but thoroughly unsound in grain, except created in us by that Spirit who bears witness to Christ's blood. (5) What a humbling and entering deeply into the prayer 'Thy will be done' comes through subjection of heart to this truth—that Christ's blood is at the root of all true holiness. (6) If you attain to the power of this mystery it will make you say, To him be glory for ever. Amen. 3rd. After thus going through the text, I returned to enforce especially the beginning of it, viz. that Christ saved us through his own death, and brings death on all our legal efforts, and through this death he quickens us to a hope out of self, and in him.

Isaiah xxxv. 8, 9, 'And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.'

I HAD wished to prosecute my morning's subject by dwelling in the evening on this part of it, 'through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work,' &c., but in very simply praying and watching, I rather found a light on the above words from Isaiah, as substantially teaching the same great truth, namely this—the redeemed find that way of faith in Christ, which alone is the way of holiness. This therefore I took, and felt very thankful for the enlargement and power granted me in simply setting forth the gospel from the whole of this chapter. A highway is this way of gospel faith, for it is the King's own making; a way it is, for you make progress when once you are in it; it is a holy way, for you are by faith purged from the uncleanness of your natural state: those, even those described in verses 3–6, weak, feeble, fearful, blind, deaf, lame, dumb, the parched ground, and the thirsty, find this way, and walk in it. None but the redeemed seek after this way, and find it.

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one hand, and the contrite humble heart on the other hand, Almighty God should dwell.

We shall better understand how this is so, if we consider a little what this contrite humble spirit really implies, even the possession of that which is wrought of God, and therefore, surely, where it is, there also is the Lord whose presence forms it. Are we naturally contrite and humble? Not at all. As long as we continue in our natural darkness and ignorance the greater part of us are in ease and self-security, thinking and knowing nothing about the Lord. In such a state we may perhaps, as many do, fancy ourselves sufficiently humble: for we are well in our own conceit, and hope we are so in God's judgment also. Howbeit his judgment of us is far otherwise. He says we are guilty sinners, worthy only of everlasting perdition; and that all who continue in their natural state shall without doubt perish everlastingly. Do we naturally see the ground of this judgment so as practically to believe it? No, by no means. But as surely as ever this testimony begins to enter, and to gain ground in our hearts, our pride rises up against it; we are at deadly enmity against the holy law, which refuses to abate one jot of this severe judgment. This is the irritating, inflaming power of the broken law; 'The law worketh wrath;' the law revealeth sin, for 'By the law is the knowledge of sin.'

Here all are brought; and here we should all perish, were it not for the way the Lord has condescended to take. He sent forth his Son in our nature, to believe and live, suffer and die, not only humble, but in the fullest sense contrite also: made so, not for sin of his own, for he had none, but because our sin was imputed to him. He submitted to the holy law to the utmost, he endured its bitter penalty and curse for the sins of proud sinners of mankind. This is he who says in the chapter I read to you this evening, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' You see he will have them dwell with him. 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' If, says Christ, you learn of me meekness and lowliness, you shall find the rest: if your spirits become contrite and humble I will dwell with you. This is the fountain of all salvation to us. If you and I be not enabled by divine faith to receive this, and from this fountain to draw all our hope, we never can be humbled, the innate pride of our nature will never be cast out, and the spirit of meekness work in our hearts. We can never humble ourselves. This humbling of Christ must prove our humbling. This is the scriptural direction to us in prayer. It is for this Christ, the hope of glory, we must pray—pray to know him, to believe in him, to shelter our souls under him: and those who thus pray from their hearts, have the spirit of prayer, and shall prevail. And what then? Why the Lord is with them. His right hand and holy arm hath gotten him this victory. Thus wherever throughout the whole earth a contrite

and humble heart is, there also is the great Lord who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, dwelling there.

August 3, 1855.*

Isaiah ix. 13, 'For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.'

If we examine the chapter which contains these words we find (verses 6, 7) a most divine prophecy of Christ, as at once 'child' and 'son,' 'The Mighty God,' and 'The everlasting Father;' which last name is not to be taken as confounding his Person with the Person of the Father, but as declaring that Christ (as the whole Godhead is) is the spiritual Father of the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated church.

After these glorious words the prophet sets forth the outward judgments which lighted on the Israel of his day for their sins, 'The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind,' devouring them as with open mouth: and in the text he declares that in this trouble they turned not to their correcting God, nor sought the Lord of hosts. They were like us, and such are all men as far as ever they are left to themselves: wherefore, if you and I find profit from the reproof of this word, to do better, know it is of grace. Now seeing, as the prophet says, the Lord's 'anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still,' one would suppose, according to reason, that this was to drive them away for ever, and to keep them from seeking him: for who would seek consuming fire? But, behold, the very reverse is true! The Lord's continued displeasure is because they do not turn to him, and do not seek him.

Know now what this means. It means something which you and I can never avail ourselves of by all our strivings, but if we are enabled to fall down prostrate before Christ, as lost sinners, we shall certainly find it: even the eternal love to sinners which, through Christ, the Lord God has in himself to give them. Ask for this. Be sure you slip not from this gospel point. I do not say it is in your own power to find the profit of it, but if you feel your need of it, that it is precious, and you love it, and ask for it, God will give it you. The turning to him that smiteth is the fulfilment of Heb. xii. 5, 6. The seeking the Lord shows that he appears far off and absent. All these things are easily understood in the letter of them, but the finding of them, the groaning under the unbelief and pride of our wicked hearts, the being brought down to feel ourselves lost and ruined sinners, the contrite and broken heart, make all these things difficult to the Lord's awakened family, yet blessed, and only to them a blessing.

January 6, 1861.

Jeremiah xxiv. 4–7, 'Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.'

I CONSIDERED the great simplicity of these words which contain a message of grace and mercy towards many of those Jews who had been carried captive in the second and principal of the three divisions of the Babylonish captivity. There were blessed saints amongst these, such as Daniel and his fellows: and think of the consolation and edification they must have found in Jeremiah's words! This is that blessing, which, if the Lord grant us faith, we shall find to this day even in these same words. For they are words containing a particular application of a general truth embodied in the whole scriptures; and shining forth with especial clearness in that portion of Romans viii which I have just read (verses 18–39).

This truth is, that the church of God upon earth is everywhere subject to divers captivities. There is a deep spiritual captivity treated of by Paul in the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans. In the 7th, speaking (as I hold without doubt) of himself as a regenerate man, he says, 'I am carnal, sold under sin . . . O wretched man that I am!' And in the 8th chapter he says of all saints, that together with the whole creation they groan within themselves, 'waiting for the adoption.' This dreadful captivity is through indwelling sin. Unbelief is the great head of it; and all outward afflictions, pains, deaths, are only parts of the effects of it. Those who groan under it, are still the Lord's ransomed ones. Oh, how sweet the text becomes when, by the Lord's gift of faith, we are truly enabled to find the power of it!

I went through the parts of the text as follows: 1st. The Lord acknowledges the captives. 2nd. He brings the captivity for their good. 3rd. His eyes are set on them, not in the dreadful broken law, but for good. 4th. They shall find the kingdom of heaven on earth (their own land) again. 5th. They have been broken down and plucked up, but they shall be builded and planted. 6th. The Lord will give them a new heart. 7th. They were spiritually ignorant of the Lord, but he (not their own sagacity) will give them the true knowledge of himself. 8th. The covenant of their everlasting adoption shall be made clear to them; wherein he makes them his, and becomes theirs. 9th. They shall not wander and be hardened, but return and repent, and that with all their heart; so constraining is the power of his love.

February 8, 1861.

Isaiah xxx. 23, 'Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.'

THESE are promises denoting plenty and enlargement. I do not wish too closely to press the figures used: but I know well, that whosoever has a heart given him to desire FIRST the Lord's kingdom and righteousness, will rejoice to consider these and all other promises, clothed in earthly figures, in their spiritual power; and it behoves us to consider the spiritual state of heart to which these promises are addressed. My text says, 'THEN shall he give,' &c. If then we look back, we find a most forcible and instructive description of our natural pride and corruption, and of the way of life, which is even by faith. For the prophet does no more than relate the rebellion of all our hearts naturally against humbling grace, when he says, verses 15 and 16, 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved . . . and ye would not. But ye said, No.' Whosoever has not yet found that so he rebels against the sovereign grace of Christ, he is without real self-knowledge. Nay, those who are brought to submit to grace by God's strong hand upon them, are in one way or another made at times to feel themselves left even as a desolate beacon on a hill (verse 17). And through all this, the Lord waits; they think that he waits in wrath, but he waits to be gracious: beautiful grace follows, as described in verses 18 and 19. All this goes not on without affliction, but with 'the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction,' yet such are brought to reverence above everything the divine teaching. I am sure none but such as are pourtrayed in these words value the teaching; others think themselves wise enough. These alone hear the 'voice behind:' for God's dispensations when they are past have a teaching voice. These also defile and abhor all those coverings of their spiritual idolatries, which are the substance of the false hopes of unrenewed men.

Now whenever these things are fulfilled, then will the Lord give the rain of their seed. Oh, it is a sweet figure denoting the power of the Holy Spirit fertilizing the word in our hearts which we continually go forth and sow, though it should be even weeping. The gentleness and sweetness of grace, the favour of spiritual enlargement and liberty, are here promised, and most assuredly by such persons enjoyed.

July 21, 1861.*

Romans viii. 2-4, 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

I HAD been under a peculiar cloud through manifold temptations,

which had been graciously and unexpectedly broken by the entrance of the above words, and that with such an unfolding of them as led to my preaching from them, which I did to my great relief and encouragement.

I took a short view of the substance of the last part of the 7th chapter, and spoke of the reality of that holy grief which is set forth in the words, 'O wretched man that I am!' Then is the spiritual entrance of the gospel inexpressibly sweet and blessed. The framework of my sermon is shown in the following paraphrase:—

The holy law of God is strong enough to curse and condemn us all as sinners, but not able to make us holy. Therefore we must cease from all hope in it. But God so loved the world (sinners amongst men whom he had chosen in Christ) that he sent forth Christ, his own eternal Son, of one substance with himself, to assume our nature, so to be in the likeness of sinful flesh, though without sin. This divine and holy person fulfilled the holy law, and bore its curse also; and thus there can be no condemnation for them that are in him. Thus through our unity with him in the covenant of grace the law's righteousness is fulfilled in us, and our persons are for ever justified, and, being justified, the Spirit freely works holiness in our hearts. Hence we fervently turn away from dependence on our own works, from expecting a blessing through our own legal efforts, and we rely on the Spirit only—to whom with the Father and the Son, one God, we ascribe all glory.

June 29, 1862.

Titus ii. 11–14, 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,' &c.

I BEGAN by speaking of the doctrines of grace, as briefly but very clearly implied in the former part of this epistle, and I dwelt at some length on several parts of it, but especially the first six verses. Then I showed how the apostle directs the messages of the gospel to be sent to all ranks and orders of men, old and young, male and female, bond or free, for the Lord's commission is that his servants should go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. But let all take heed that they preach no other gospel than the gospel of the grace of God only: for Christ has never ordered a diluted gospel, nor a mongrel gospel, to be preached throughout the world; but that holy gospel which testifies the bounty and mercy of God in saving sinners through his mediation alone.

This it is which he says in my text 'hath appeared to all men.' To men of all sorts and in divers places this gospel has been publicly and abundantly preached. This brings salvation; it does not only render our state salvable, but it brings the salvation itself to us

effectually. This grace teaches us; it brings us under discipline, as the original word signifies; which teaching is elsewhere most fully attributed to the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost. This mighty power overcomes all sin and temptation: let a man be never so much the slave to sin by nature, as soon as this divine Spirit undertakes his salvation, the power of sin is broken. Here I dwelt largely upon the life-giving power of grace. Till it enters and gives life we are like the dry bones in the valley of vision.

Titus ii. 13, 14. 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

I HAD read these words as part of the morning text, but want of time prevented my treating them, and as they contained the chief part of what had impressed me as the subject to which I was led in prayer, I prosecuted my discourse on them in the evening.

I dwelt, however, first, on one part of my morning text, the words 'soberly, righteously, and godly,' as defining the daily walk of the Christian to whom grace brings salvation. The first denotes the quietness and tenderness of his spirit; the second, the tenderness (not legality) of his conscience; the third, his reverential love and fear of God. No man can expect to work these things in himself: they truly find them who continue asking for them as Christ's free gift. Then I spoke of the earnest love to Christ which will follow, which works in us a desire to attain to his spiritual coming, and so prepares us for his second coming, the glorious appearing named in my text. I dwelt also on the divinity of Christ, who is here called our great God and Saviour. But the main point I dwelt upon was the redemption and sanctification of the church through his blood,—he 'gave himself for us.' I showed that this divine work could not be in vain: it expresses what Christ did for all who are saved, and for them only. When we feel ourselves foolish, base, and polluted, let us, through faith implored and found, view Christ given instead of ourselves. Oh, the divine glory of this change! His perfection, glory, holiness, life, in the room of our weakness, shame, sin, and death! The Lord grant us this faith.

November 15, 1863.

1 Corinthians iv. part of verse 5. 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.'

I SAID that these words standing alone unconnected furnish us with a precept, which it will be our mercy indeed to find grace to obey. There is nothing which brings our souls into a greater ferment

of temptation than giving way to a judging spirit to which we are not called; especially a spirit of judging the Lord's dispensations, instead of reverently waiting till the time when all shall be cleared up, i.e. the time when the Lord comes. But we shall better understand the force and extent of this caution given to us, when we consider also the connection in which it stands.

The apostle, in the previous chapter, speaks of the certainty of the Lord's judgment to try us, and all our ways. He says, especially of ministers, that they may haply build even what is worthless upon the only foundation, Christ; and their work shall be burned up, though they shall be saved. An entrance into this truth will cause all who have spiritual life to be ever fleeing unto Jesus. In this state he says even of himself in the chapter of the text, 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment' (verse 3). And why so small? Because 'he that judgeth me is the Lord.' No wonder that in the presence of this divine judge he should account man's judgment small. Moreover, says he, 'I know nothing *against* myself,' as the Greek is,—I am not conscious of anything wrong, yet this natural good conscience does not justify me. No, Christ must do that, or all the hope he may have in his good conscience will be burned up with fire. Hence the precept, 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.' Remember here, that if you judge before the Lord come, you judge before the time, and so are sure to judge wrong. In fact he means that we should never be in a judging spirit, but always as little babes before Christ. In any particular inward trial or temptation, if you watch for the Lord and seek him, he will come in the right time, and make the crooked straight. But for all judgment on the deep ways of providence and of grace, we must wait till the Lord himself shall appear the second time.

November 20, 1863.

John xi. 16, 'Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

I BELIEVE these were words of faith and love in the apostle who spoke them; and the connection of them is very noticeable from verse 7 and onward. For it is evident from this account, especially if it be compared with Mark x. 32, that the disciples were exceedingly afraid of going to Jerusalem at that time: they thought it might prove, as it did prove, that Christ's enemies should prevail against him. Notice, then, the firm and gentle manner in which the Lord, according to his word, made his people willing in the day of his power.

He intimated his purpose to go to Jerusalem, and when they remonstrated he showed them, by a simple parable, that they had

better abide with their light, their Sun of righteousness, and they would find it kept them from stumbling. But when they were yet reluctant, verse 12, he began, in verse 15, to show them his love for them, and that their abiding with him would issue in the strengthening of their faith. He was glad to go, that they might believe. This melted them, and Thomas, speaking the language of all, said, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' Love to Christ kindled these words. Nor need we doubt that this child of God had a certain spiritual gleam of that most blessed doctrine, which contains the essence of the gospel, viz. this, 'It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.'

This doctrine, in the spiritual essence of it, is foolishness to the wise and prudent, yet revealed to babes. O let us seek for the full revelation of it! God hath chosen us in Christ before the world was, and the whole church died, and rose again in her great Head. Hence comes our strength, our stability, and our victory.

February 26, 1864.

Revelations i. 17, 18, 'And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.'

I HAD a spiritual view of one part of the above words, which made the whole passage edifying. I considered what the feelings were which combined to produce this result, 'I fell at his feet as dead.' When the glory of God, or of Christ who is God, one with the Father in majesty and holiness, is revealed to a sinner, this death will be fully understood. It is indeed a death to all self-wrought hopes, a discovery of God as a consuming fire against sin and unransomed sinners. The coming of Christ brings this with it, but is always followed in the heart of the humbled sinner with the power of 'his right hand,' which he laid upon the apostle John, saying unto him, 'Fear not.' For this life-giving word, 'Fear not,' the Lord subjoins the deep reason, even this, 'I am he that liveth, and was dead.' Let the gospel explain this truth, and it is no less than this—that the Lord Jesus died in the room of sinners, and as their substitute, and mysteriously, yet really, he bore the curse of the broken law, due for sin, and so when he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven he claimed, as his divine right, that the church which he had purchased by his own blood should for his sake be exempted from death. So he has divine authority to say to those who fall at his feet as dead, 'Fear not; I am the first and the last: I live, and was dead, and, behold, I live for ever, and death and hell are subject to my power—therefore, Fear not.'

February 28, 1864.*

John xi. 25-27, 'Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.'

THESE were, as far as I know, the last words which comforted and established our dear friend Miss J. S., a little before her death. She said to me, 'My disease overpowers me to-day, but yesterday you might have prayed for me and praised for me, too, for I felt the words, "I am the resurrection, and the life." I am not going to say much personally respecting her, partly because I know how she would have entreated me not to do so: and I hope a higher desire than to hear how it was with another, has brought us together, even the desire to find Christ for ourselves, to enter into the blessed gospel of my text, and by spiritual diligence make our calling and election sure, as our departed friend did continually.

Consider the words of my text, and that Jesus was then speaking to Martha, whose brother Lazarus had died and was buried, and she knew not that Jesus was about to raise him from the dead. She was in a blessed frame of mind, for not only did she believe in Jesus as the Christ, and the Son of God, but she knew, and said unto the Lord, that EVEN NOW, whatsoever he would ask of God, God would give it him. All this is Christian faith indeed; its great object, Jesus, is clearly revealed to it: wherefore she was in that frame of spirit which always receives the word of life, and consequently Christ would give it her. He goes beyond her present thoughts. As a little while after this he surprised Thomas, who asked the way, by saying, 'I am the way;' so here he surprises Martha, who asked about the resurrection, by saying, 'I am the resurrection;' and he adds also, I am 'the life.'

In that Christ is 'the resurrection' to all his people, they are evidently all dead before his coming to them. They are the dry bones in the valley of vision, of whom Ezekiel speaks; and because they are destined to life, the Lord's ministers prophesy upon them and say, 'O ye dry bones, hear.' In that Christ says he is 'the life' also, he means that when they are raised from the dead they cannot continue to live except he live in them. Now this, rightly understood, shows us the great mistake made by many. They substitute the work of faith for this power of Christ, and say, 'Only believe, and that you can surely do, and then all is right.' But they do not and will not see that all Christ's people are dead, till his coming gives them life. I know indeed that he will give his people faith; yea, faith is the first motion of their new life; but it is not the life-giver, nor can they maintain it in themselves more than they can create it in themselves—Christ must do both.

Christ does not in my text say the same thing over and again, but his words are progressive. First he gives the life; then he maintains the life: as respects the first, the dead believe and so live, Christ being present: and whoever thus lives shall live for ever; he 'shall never die,' says Christ. Who then says he shall die, when Christ says he shall not die?

September 4, 1864.

Psalm xxiii. 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want,' &c.

HERE is set forth unto us a blessed discovery made by David, the man after God's own heart, and therefore a divinely regenerated man, viz. that Jehovah is his shepherd. Now we know under the gospel, as Christ says over and again, that he is our shepherd: wherefore most assuredly Christ is himself Jehovah, one God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. It is no wonder, seeing Jehovah is our shepherd, that we shall want nothing. And this we must feel and believe to be true, although, as Ezekiel says in the 34th chapter, there are no good under-shepherds. I have felt it a grievous thing that the Lord reproves all shepherds as being bad, but I now see that the good shepherds must hide their heads, and become lost sheep when the Lord reproves, and then they will be safe, and the Lord will seek them out, and bring them back: for so will he do to all lost sheep. Now what the Lord Jesus will do to David, and to us also who believe on his name, is this,—he will supply all our need. All believers, like David, are poor and needy men, oppressed with the body of sin and death, and need grace above all things: therefore they shall have it. They need to be guided and delivered in all troubles: therefore they shall be so guided and delivered. Even as this Psalm says, 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.' (As he began with the metaphor of the shepherd and his flock, he will go on with it.) The pastures are the word; the 'green pastures' are the word through the Spirit receiving a fresh quickening. 'He leadeth me beside the still waters.' The waters are stilled. When is it that still waters delight? Even after a storm: as it is said in Psalm cvii. 25–30, 'He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof . . . Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble . . . (and afterwards) are they glad because they be quiet.' 'He restoreth my soul,' i. e. my soul went astray, and he brought me back: you see he is a repenting sinner. 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.' Here is the whole gospel in a single word. The Lord works for the glory of his NAME. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' The way leads through this dark valley; there is no escaping it. Yet even then the Lord's presence

comes, or his creating voice commands faith, 'Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God' (Isa. l. 10), and the rod and the staff do nothing but comfort the soul. 'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.' Here is help in the battle, the good fight of faith. Even before the enemies is this table prepared: and it is the Lord who prepares it, according to his gracious word, 'Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them' (Luke xii. 37). In short, blessing upon blessing will this divine shepherd give, till all ends at last in life everlasting, and abiding 'in the house of the Lord for ever.'

Now remember these are the things given by this shepherd, and given by him when there are no good under-shepherds, so he does what they neglect to do. 'I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.' The trouble they find, and through it, and out of it, the deliverance they shall find too. So ask the Lord for the fulfilment of his word till he gives it you.

June 25, 1865.

2 Corinthians v. 9, 10, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'

I BEGAN by dwelling briefly on the former verses: then I dwelt upon the first verse of the text, considering 1st, How real and deep a labour, spiritual labour is: 2nd, How utterly it differs from legal labour: 3rd, The object of the labour is to know we are accepted; not only to be accepted, but to know it: 4th, This acceptance is our free justification through the blood and righteousness of Christ only: 5th, I considered Joshua the son of Josedec as an eminent example of this. Now tell me if such a gift as this is not honourable and glorious? Is it not worthy of our earnest desire and searching for? Then know that the apostle for 'labour' uses the word φιλοτιμούμεθα (I do not mean I quoted the Greek in the pulpit), we so labour for it as to 'love the honour' of obtaining it.

Let the light of this be with us, when we reflect that 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' That all must stand there is a scripture truth, clear from Matthew xxv, which I have read; but the people of God will there only receive their eternal absolution. How

so, seeing they are to receive the things done in the body? are not many of these things evil? Yes indeed they are, but the free justification of grace has cancelled the evil. Their Judge is their Advocate, as my text on Friday evening, Psalm xliii. 1, clearly sets forth.

One thing more I notice from these words. We read, 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.' The original word is φανερωθῆναι δεῖ, i. e. we must all 'be made manifest or proved' before that judgment seat. Have we received the true grace, which alone makes our religion worthy of the name? Are we truly regenerated, or have we only the false appearance of regeneration? These things are searching. The Lord enable us to bear them and come to the light, that our deeds may be proved, as wrought in God.

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2 Corinthians v. 18–21, 'And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

THE subject appeared far too high and too deep for me, but the Lord helped me to discern a little of it by faith. What hath God wrought! Reconciled his church to himself by Jesus Christ. God the Father, Son, and Spirit hath done this by the incarnation of Christ. He loved his church before, and put all the members of it into Christ's hand; but it was needful that Christ should bear the curse of their sin, that they might enjoy the blessing of his righteousness. God forbid that you or I should find the least hope except through this substitution of Christ in our room. This is the gospel against which the world is now rising up, and many who still call themselves Christians boldly deny it.

The word of this reconciliation is the principal subject of the Christian ministry. God forbid that we should not dwell upon it continually. Christ sends this gospel by his messengers as a king sends forth his ambassadors. Except there be a feeling power and spiritual application of the word in ourselves, we have no credentials from the Lord. We need this gospel, we find it, we enjoy and love it—then we preach and persuade too, yet not we, but the Lord. Not that he persuades men as the Arminians say, 'Christ is waiting to receive you, do not disappoint him by refusing to be saved.' Such a gospel as that is altogether vain. But if he save you he will arise in his might, and make you willing in the day of his power, and will bring you down to confess your sin, and to put no trust in your duties—he will do ALL for you, but never a part only. For behold what God hath already done! He hath made the sinless Jesus sin,

i. e. a curse for sin, for you; that you might be made the divine righteousness in him. How clearly, then, Christ is God, seeing his righteousness is the righteousness of God!

March 8, 1867.

1 Thessalonians v. 4–11, 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.'

I HAD continued long seeking and praying for a subject; yet I fear in too easy a way; but found nothing but confusion, with an indistinct blending in of part of my text. At last, with a cry to be heard in Christ's name, I took the whole passage as above, and found a very encouraging enlargement and opening of the words.

I began by dwelling on the declaration of the Lord's coming in chapter iv, and of the confusion of his enemies in the beginning of chapter v, and said, Here are two scriptural statements to be believed and embraced, though we neither know the time of the Lord's descending, nor many other points too curiously enquired after by many. It is certain those wicked who shall be overwhelmed with terror, have no mind or desire to 'watch and be sober,' for they do not wish to fear God, and have no love to him, but say, 'Depart from us.' The apostle is addressing those who have given a most hopeful testimony of their true conversion, but he says by implication in verse 6, 'If it be so this will prove it, you will watch and be sober.' In watching is expectation and love, in soberness is humility and consistency. He says 'putting on,' i. e. keep ever putting on 'the breastplate of faith and love.' Elsewhere he calls it 'the breastplate of righteousness.' Faith and love, or faith working by love, brings in Christ our righteousness: thus these breastplates are both one. The word of God assures us that Christ will come, and come in love to all believers. This brings in hope, and the hope defends the head like a helmet. By this shall our calling and election be made sure. Christ is given that we may 'obtain salvation.' For by his death he atoned for us, and by its virtue restores our souls, as David says, Psalm xxiii. Though, therefore, even the wise virgins slumbered and slept for a time, they were awakened; and found their life to be in Christ. Take comfort from hence, and be earnest.

Brighton, *October* 6, 1867. *

1 Thessalonians v. 16-23, 'Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil,' &c.

I HAD neither intended to preach, nor was prepared so to do, but Mr. Wallinger sent to request me, so that I could not decline. I felt a gleam from the above words when I began to pray for help, and accordingly took them. I had not time in my discourse to go through them, but dwelt especially on the first five verses.

1st. I showed that all attention to the precept is without the fruit of life, except the gospel of the Lord Jesus in its practical power as the source of spiritual life be indeed in our hearts. We can only obey the precept as this prayer is answered, 'Lord, fulfil thy word in us, according to thy gospel.' 2nd. I considered the first three clauses in connection with the fourth, 'This is the will of God concerning you.' What is his will? That 'in Christ Jesus' you should 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing,' and 'in everything give thanks.' Praise; prayer; rejoicing. Not that in practice you can always rejoice, neither that rejoicing is the only acceptable frame; for 'Blessed are they that mourn:' nevertheless press forward to the sensible manifestation of Christ, for in him is the fruit of joy found. And though you should not be able to rejoice, yet there is joy in store for all such; still pray, yea, 'pray without ceasing,' i. e. in Christ's name; and you have reason also to give thanks in everything. The trials which seem against you are certainly for you, if you are reaching forward to Christ. 3rd. 'Quench not the Spirit.' I do not take this in the Arminian sense, but believe it to be a charge to living believers that they be not untender in their walk through the workings of the body of sin. It is a solemn and awful charge, and the same as declared in another word, 'Grieve not the Spirit.' The words show us, or ought to show us, the tender love of God—Grieve it not. 4th. 'Despise not prophesyings.' It will be granted the apostle means true prophesyings. Such were the words of the Old Testament prophets. Despise them not: they testify of Christ. Many of these are now fulfilled, and by their fulfilment made 'sure' (2 Peter i. 19). I do not gather from the charge in my text that we are always to be dwelling on unfulfilled prophecies, for by so doing we only lose our time, and fill ourselves with wind instead of solid spiritual food: and I am glad that in this view I agree with your esteemed pastor. But there is another view I wish to take from these words. That is, that the ministration of the gospel by ministers sent of God, is indeed a prophesying. They prophesy like Ezekiel upon the dry bones of the house of Israel, and say, 'Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.' This is a great

prophecy: despise it not: your life is in it. Let the poor and needy, those who feel the encroachment of spiritual death, hear and receive the great word, 'ye shall live.'

I have no time to go further, but may 'the God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless (through the justifying blood and righteousness of Christ applied and imputed) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Amen.

January 17, 1868.

Matthew xxviii. 16-20, 'Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.'

I OBSERVED that, though the eleven apostles are named as going into Galilee, there were really many present besides them, for here it was that the apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. xv, notices that 'above five hundred brethren at once' saw Christ. We may infer that those who still 'doubted' were some of this number, but they heard the words which Jesus came and spake, and they doubted no more.

Then I considered the words in order: 1st. The power in heaven and earth given to Christ—he reigns as God-man: so that sinners of mankind are permitted to come before him, and instead of trying to make their case better they confess the evil of it, and this is the way to find pardon and healing. 2nd. Because of this power in Christ, the apostles and other ministers, and all true servants of God, fulfil their appointed measure of service: the gospel is preached, and the preaching is effectual. Baptize them, says Christ, in the name of Almighty God, Jehovah; Father, Son, and Spirit. Here I admit is the appointment of Christian baptism, but I deny that the letter of this baptism [i. e. the outward sign] fulfils the exceeding broad commandment. To enter deeply into all gospel doctrines respecting this God of salvation, is the only real fulfilling of Christ's word. Those instructed by grace to know the love, the election, the drawing of the Father—they are baptized in the Father's name. So also those who know the grace, the mediation, the redeeming love of the Son, the communion and renewing power of the Holy Ghost—they are baptized in the name of the Son, and the Spirit. They only are enabled to fulfil obediently all that Christ enjoins. And these things abide without change to the end of the world. 'Amen,' says the apostle.

February 16, 1868. *

John iii. 5–8, 'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'

THESE were part of the words which Jesus spake to a learned Jew, Nicodemus, who, though I believe him to have had true grace, was at the time in much darkness, and could not understand the Lord's words. Learned men have very often misunderstood them since the day they were first spoken, for by being 'born of water' the Lord has been supposed by many to refer to water baptism. But those who tell us that this is the case, do not find themselves able to avoid qualifying the words, for they feel obliged to add to all they say of the necessity of water baptism, that it is not necessary to the new birth: whereas Christ by the words 'born of water' expresses something which he declares to be necessary. Brethren, why then may we not with the greatest of all the reformers of the Reformation of the 16th century take the words simply, as they may be translated without the slightest forcing, 'Except a man be born of water, even the Spirit,' and by this to mean that except a man be born of the Spirit, cleansing his soul as water cleanses the body, 'he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?' The apostle Paul's words in Eph. v. 25, 26, are analogous, 'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' The whole teaches us that the Lord, by regeneration, cleanses a man from his sin. But you will ask, How do we know that Christ means this? I reply, It seems to me that he declares he means it, in the next verse, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' For is not water baptism outward or fleshly, and how can a presumptuous man suppose, that by sprinkling or immersing either man or child, he fulfils the renewing work of God! Therefore the text teaches us the absolute necessity of spiritual regeneration. May the Lord speak this upon our heart, as he did upon the heart of Nicodemus; for one of the first signs of spiritual life is an effectual entrance into the word, 'Ye must be born again.' And we must not marvel at this, for the reality of this necessity is plain: and the Spirit will act as the wind, free to come where and when he pleases, known by the effect he produces, but himself invisible and untraceable.

But what is the use, then, of water baptism? It is a beautiful sign of the abiding continuance of the grace of God through all generations. Also it stirs up faith in those who hold it to be allowed of God. Also it leads us to consider that great name, The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in or into which we and our children are baptized. To know this great name in the power of it, is to be Christians indeed, and born of the Spirit.

Eastbourne, *June* 24, 1869. *

Romans viii. 26, 27, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.'

Having felt too weak to preach, and likely to forget parts of my sermon, I had deviated from my usual habit, and begun to arrange my matter in notes. But I found that this plan was only putting on Saul's armour; so I discarded it, only meditating on the words, and waiting for help from above. I thank God he graciously helped me, so that I was stronger after preaching than before. I considered two points: 1st. The Spirit himself. 2nd. The gracious work he fulfils.

In treating of the 1st point I commented on Isaiah xl, which I had read, wherein the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are set forth as the comfort of Israel. When I came to the words, 'Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord?' they brought me to my 2nd point,—His gracious work. He 'helpeth our infirmities.' He helps the new man against the old, whose inroads seem to render grace weak and infirm, though really God's strength perfected in weakness is in it. Again, these infirm ones know not what to pray for as they ought, so they cannot rest in their prayers: they look beyond to Christ alone, and to this blessed helper, the Spirit. They do not understand the depth of their own inward and spiritual groanings. But the Lord who searcheth the hearts, and does so in mercy, knows where the spiritual mind really is, and will not suffer it to be overcome. Lastly. The foundation of all is salvation by 'the will of God.' Fall down, and ask for this; be not discouraged. Amen.

July 9, 1869. *

Isaiah lvii. 15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'

Through a weakness in my voice I could hardly speak audibly, but had some feeling of the weight of the subject, and a longing after a fuller discovery of the power of it. The expression 'inhabiteth eternity' is in one sense unutterable, and full of majesty. That such a One should dwell with the humble and contrite, the brought low, and the bruised, is wonderful. Man despises the very thing which God despises not: even 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,' the sacrifice of 'a broken and a contrite heart.' How little men account of such, but the high and holy One dwells with them. He does this to cause them to live over and again—he is ever granting them new life.

DISSERTATIONS.

I.

Jacob's wrestling with the angel.

Genesis xxxii. 23-32, 'And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day,' &c.

To find, by critical learning, a light shed upon the letter of scripture is good in its place. But to find a light shed upon its directions and examples, so as to encourage us to follow them, is far better. Such is the light in which I have seen the circumstances of Jacob wrestling with the angel.

It took place at a moment of great outward danger; and I think, if we carefully attend to the narrative, we shall see that at first Jacob's fear and apparent danger must have been greatly aggravated by the juncture of time in which his unknown opponent came forth and wrestled with him. He had just sent his goods and cattle, wives and children over the ford Jabbok. To transport so large and helpless a company over the water, was probably not without hazard. So Jacob, as father, and director of the whole movement, naturally stayed behind, till all had safely passed, and thus, as Moses expressly says, 'Jacob was left alone.' His purpose, however, must have been to follow his family instantly, and be ready for what happened next morning, to pass over before them as his hostile brother advanced. But this was the juncture of time in which (though the night had come on) 'there wrestled a man with Jacob until the breaking of the day.' We may conceive the energy with which Jacob, at first, would have resisted the efforts of this stranger, and apparent enemy, to keep him from going over to the succour of his helpless family. But all Jacob's efforts were in vain, for even when morning dawned, though he does not appear to have been driven back (for the word *wrestling* implies that he stood his ground), yet had he not been able to advance forward. At last, the mighty opposer, with one touch of his hand, dislocated Jacob's thigh, and so taking away all his power to stand or withstand, left him no resource except to clasp his opposer in his arms, and refuse to loose his hold.

It is certain that, as this mysterious conflict proceeded, Jacob became gradually more and more persuaded that both the opposer and the battle were supernatural. At last, faith and spiritual strength

began to spring up vigorously; so that when, at last, the stranger said, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh,' Jacob replied, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;' which answer appears the more striking, when we consider that Jacob, at that time, was disabled from wrestling, and had taken to cleaving. The stranger and adversary then manifested his good pleasure at Jacob's importunity, revealed himself as the Lord, doubtless the Saviour in man's form, though not yet manifested in man's nature: and he blessed Jacob with the name of Israel, to signify that he had prevailed with God, and should also prevail with man *.

This whole account is doubtless intended, and has doubtless proved an instruction and encouragement to all the spiritual seed of Jacob, from that day to this.

Consider, then, how it was with Jacob. He had acted prudently and carefully. It must have appeared very needful both to him and to his family that he should, without delay, rejoin them; yet this very needful step it was, which the Lord disabled him from taking throughout the night of his wrestling. Jacob thought at first, that an enemy had come forth against him. All his efforts proved vain, his plans abortive, and at last his strength either to stand or fight was violently taken away. But during this strange fight, a stranger secret was made known to Jacob, namely, that this enemy was no less than his everlasting Friend. All his vehement haste to join his family was now subdued, and instead of it, there was nothing left but a stedfast cry for a blessing from him, who at first had behaved like an enemy.

Is it not very often thus, more or less, with ourselves, in those outward trials, and family trials, which the Lord very frequently ordains we should pass through? Have we not often found that the most needful step for us to take, is the step he will not suffer us to take? and so far as this goes, he seems to go out as an adversary against us. We are anxious to mend the outward trial, but a spiritual humbling and a spiritual state of mind are needful before our outward deliverance: and this we are apt to overlook. At last he makes us sensible of this, but not till he has utterly brought our own strength to nothing.

Again, Jacob wrestled till his hip being disjointed he could wrestle no more, but only cleave, and say, 'I will not let thee go.' Here we see Jacob's faith more and more assuming the nature of the true Christian faith, of which it is said, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' Jacob, in his weakness, but not in his strength, came off more than conqueror.

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* The explanation here given of Jacob's wrestling, viz. that it was occasioned by his striving to press forwards to his family, seems natural and simple. Again, the circumstance of his wrestling being changed into a cleaving, when his thigh was dislocated, is equally so: and has been stated and improved by the late G. D. Krummacher, in sermons written by him on the subject.—B. G.

So it infallibly is in the Lord's controversy with all the spiritual seed of Jacob. At first the Lord's dealings often sorely alarm them, and seem intended to cut off their hopes. Their plans are disconcerted, their purposes broken. The Lord, apparently, goes forth against them. Their strength is turned into perfect weakness; but, in all this, faith and love begin to work, and at last they say, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'

After all, how easily the Lord ordered all things for Jacob's good. His disjointed limb was restored, his remaining lameness being only like an honourable scar in battle. The sun arose. He passed over the water in time to encourage his family; he went before them to meet Esau, and God turned Esau's heart to meet him kindly.

II.

Christ's promise to lead the worship in the assemblies of his people.

Psalm xxii. 22, thus quoted in Hebrews ii. 12, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.'

WHILE I was preaching from Hebrews ii. 11–13, I felt a spring of joy in considering this quotation from the 22nd Psalm. For Christ, in it, declares what he will do, and that in the church or assembly of his people. I will declare the Lord's name (says he) to my brethren; which is, in the spirit of it, I will preach to them the gospel of grace. Not this only, but he adds further, In the midst of the assembly will I sing praise to thee. He says elsewhere (John xvii. 26), 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it:' and again in Psalm xxii, and here in Hebrews ii, he repeats his resolution to do the same. He will be a mouth and wisdom to his ministers in preaching the pure grace of God. He will also lead their praises, yea, saith he, 'in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.' So that preaching, and praising (or singing praise) shall all be his work. True faith and hope in the sure fulfilment of this word is the life and joy of Christian fellowship in worship.

III.

On Psalm LXI.

'Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer,' &c.

THIS Psalm furnishes an example of what very often may be found in different parts of the Old Testament. An important doctrine of the gospel is in a manner hidden in it, and so closely hidden (though

still under simple and expressive words) that, except we know the doctrine as more clearly revealed in the New Testament, we should not have discovered it in the Old: and except we feel and love the power of it in our own hearts, we shall not look for it, nor expect it, under the veil of Moses. David begins his Psalm by crying out in the anguish of his spirit, 'Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.' Some suppose he thus wrote in some moment of overwhelming outward affliction, as when Absalom conspired against him: but whether so or not, every exercised believer knows well, that such afflictions are sent to bring down the heart, spiritually, to such a cry of faith as we have here. Neither can we doubt that by 'the rock that is higher than I,' David meant that Rock of ages, which essentially and really is the Christ of God alone. What we should notice is the simple depth and compass of his words. Does not the expression 'from the end of the earth,' denote that his distance from the desired point seems to him as great as possible? And does not his expression 'when my heart is overwhelmed,' denote the utmost abounding of distress and fear? How fully is such a prayer fitted to the lips of all who are 'in heaviness through manifold temptations.'

But in the next three verses there is, as I may say, a little reviving; which begins in David's heart by his remembering the help which he had on former occasions found in the Lord. 'Thou hast been a shelter for me, (i. e. in times past,) and a strong tower from the enemy.' Then follows the resolution, or, as he terms it himself a little further on, the 'vow' of his faith, 'I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.' For one 'overwhelmed,' and at 'the end of the earth,' suddenly to enter into the tabernacle of God, and to be gathered by the Saviour, 'as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,' is a wonderful change indeed. But so it is, as David goes on to say; so hath the Lord done, and it is marvellous in our eyes, 'for thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.' David has aspired to this change, he has looked up for it, and truly attains to it: but how is this change effected in his case, or in our case? Only by the fulness of this gospel word, 'Ye are complete in Christ.'

Here comes in what I observed at first, the important gospel doctrine, hidden, though uttered in simple and expressive words. 'Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.' To suppose, as some try to do, that David here speaks of himself, is to suppose that he did not speak the truth; for so far from abiding through many generations, he only served his own generation, and fell asleep. To suppose, as the ancient Jews did, (according to the Chaldee Paraphrast,) that the years of king Messias are here promised to be as the generations of

this world and of the world to come, is true, but not all the truth; for how can it be said of Christ in his own Person only, that mercy, as well as truth, is needful to preserve him? The whole gospel doctrine must be taken into account. Christ the King is the head: sinners, quickened by grace and so believing in him, are the members. The head and members as one body are preserved through all generations. Mercy and truth preserve this mystical body for ever. David is himself a part of it. David derives that love by which he praises, and that grace by which he performs his vows, from unity with Christ the King for ever. This is seen in the concluding verse of the Psalm. For, 'So,' says he, (i. e. by mercy and truth prepared,) 'will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.' Not, as his wise son Solomon observes in Eccles. v. 5, that he should 'vow and not pay,' for that is worse than not to vow at all; but he shall daily perform his vows: which can only be by his vital union with Christ, of whose fulness all saints receive, and grace for grace.

There are also many other places in scripture, wherein, as here, the writers seem to a superficial reader to speak in a legal spirit, as if striving to keep the law and be justified by works, which is fruitless: whereas spiritual attention to their words will show, as in the concluding verse of this Psalm, that their aim is to keep Christ in view, who fulfils the law for them and in them, and writes it in their inward parts.

IV.

On Psalm LXII.

'Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation,' &c.

THIS is a very instructive and a very encouraging Psalm. The first ten verses of it are occupied in describing and commending gospel faith, and the fruits of faith. The last two verses set forth, in brief, that spiritual increase in the knowledge of God (Col. i. 10), which is the spring of the faith before enlarged upon by David: and whereby he may be said to have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises (Heb. xi. 33). I will endeavour to set down what I hope I may say I have seen of this 'in the sanctuary,' yet we must all remember that scripture, or what may be called the mind of the Spirit in scripture, is deeper, richer, and fuller than any of us can know in this world.

I begin with the last two verses of the Psalm, which, as I have said, show David's increase in the knowledge of God. They stand thus in our translation: 'God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man accord-

ing to his work.' We should notice the emphasis of the commencement of these words, 'God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this.' The turn of the expression reminds us of Elihu's words, 'God speaketh once; yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not' (Job xxxiii. 14). God often speaks, and man hears not: but he speaks again, till all his people submit to his word. Also when David avows that not once only but twice he had heard a truth respecting God, which times without number is repeated in word, he shows us that without a spiritual application of the word it is only a dead letter. Our wisdom and happiness will be to hear with understanding, i. e. with a spiritual ear; and without this we know no truth effectually. How commonly professors lower this standard, telling us that, by insisting upon this spiritual hearing, we open the door to enthusiasm. It is true enough we do, in the manner in which the circulation of sterling money opens the door to forgery; but it would be strange to argue from thence that we had better forego the use of money. Our care must be to see that our money is good. So here. A true and real experience is needful for our souls, and our labour in the Lord must be, to separate the false from the true, and to attain, not fancied lights in our imagination, but divine light from the Lord: the clear fulfilment of the word, 'They shall be all taught of God' (John vi. 45).

David attained this holy light, whereby he discovered three things in God, which in an outward sense, all agree to be in him; but few feel the truth of it as David did. These three things are Power, Mercy, and Righteousness. 'Power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.' As for righteousness it is shown in his holy judgment: for 'thou renderest to every man according to his work.' Those who know these things in God indeed, find him to be in their behalf the God of grace. Thus the leper, in the gospel, fell down before Jesus, and said, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' He knew that power belonged to God, and his prayer was answered; 'I will, be thou clean.' This answer shows that mercy, as well as power, is in the Lord. But mercy, to be mercy at all, must be free and sovereign; and here arises our sinful contention with God. For the perfection of his holy nature requires him to reward every man according to his work. That is, it requires him to requite sin with vengeance. But in the gospel, he rewards the infinite merit of the man Christ Jesus by the salvation of those whose Surety he became. The same God who shows mercy, rewards every man according to his work, still. It is spiritual life which enables any one to see the glory of this holiness in God. David saw these things; and they became the spring of his faith and confidence; and must be the spring of ours. In this confidence of faith he was 'stablished, strengthened, settled;' and we also should daily press on to find the same establishment ourselves.

See how this faith is amplified through the former ten verses of

this Psalm. He says of God, My salvation comes from him: he is my rock, my salvation, my defence. My expectation is from him. Then again, He only is my rock, my salvation, my defence. Then over again, My salvation, my glory, the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Thus over and over, yet not once too often, he testifies the reality of that fulness which God in Christ, God powerful, merciful, holy, proved to his soul.

His faith was practical; for it led him to a continual waiting upon God: which word 'waiting' expresses the most lively exercise of hope and prayer combined. 'Truly,' says he, 'my soul waiteth upon God;' and again in verse 5, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God.' In the light of this faith all his enemies, whether outward or spiritual, fade into nothing; so that he sees them all only 'as a bowing wall,' and 'as a tottering fence' (verse 3). He rightly discerns that the real object of these enemies is, 'to cast him down from his excellency,' that is, from this divine faith. And this is the object of our chief enemy, the devil, continually: so that should he be permitted, as in Job's case, to enlist against any of us Sabeans, Chaldeans, lightning, wind, or sore diseases, his aim is one only, to cast down our faith. This also is the object of all worldly men, and mere letter Christians, to this day. For they cannot endure the confession of divine faith in any, but seek always to cast it down. Nay, very often 'they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.' For while alluring us to their own way with much blandishment, their words, if entering our spirit, always bring confusion and darkness, and would at last wither and blight all the spiritual fruits of faith in our hearts.

David is therefore very fervent in exhorting others to the same faith which has proved so effectual in his own case. 'Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him: God is a refuge for us.' That is, this God in Christ whom he has been brought to know. As for men, says he (verse 9), whether they are of high or low degree, 'they are altogether lighter than vanity.' Do not trust in them, and do not resemble them. Do not, like them, oppress God's heritage, and glory in it. Do not, like them, become vain in robbery, nor forget that presumptuous hope in God is the very highest robbery. If riches increase, do not, like men, set your hearts on a thing of nought, which shall vanish away and leave you wretched and poor indeed.

But how can David, or how can we attain to this faith, and to the fruits of it? Even by the spiritual knowledge of God. God has spoken once, says David; twice have I heard this; that power, and mercy, and judgment belong to the Lord for ever. Pray then, desire, and wait for that voice of God.

V.

On Psalm CXXXIII.

'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' &c.

WHAT I observed when treating of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones * is true also of this 133rd Psalm, and of innumerable parts of scripture besides. Those who love the gospel, and enter into and enjoy it in its fulness, will find it most simply, yet most effectually set forth in many passages which persons, insensible of its vital power in themselves, will tell us can only thus spiritually be understood by visionary mystics.

Here David beholds, and calls upon us to behold with him, a goodly sight, 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Even natural love, the love of dear relations, the love of man for man as 'made of one blood,' as far as such love suppresses malice, carnal enmity, or reckless selfishness, is both good and pleasant. But there is another kind of love, even the divine charity extolled in 1 Corinthians xiii, which excels all other love. Behold the great Messiah of God, who says, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren,'—who says to his Father, 'I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one:' how good and how pleasant it is to behold this sight by faith! Here is not only a natural union, but an eternal and unchangeable UNITY. And to what can this unity be compared? 'It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments.' Here an image is presented to David's mind, of Aaron the chosen type of Christ, in his priestly robes, anointed with the holy anointing oil. The name Christ means the Anointed; the name Messiah, by which he was known to the Old Testament saints, also means the Anointed. The true anointing is the grace and power of the Holy Ghost; and according to the image presented to the Psalmist's mind, this anointing (itself the blessing which all believers long for) descends for their benefit, even to the very skirts of his clothing. Let all who are brought low at his feet, touch the border of his garment, for virtue will flow forth from it, for the healing of all their diseases. The holy anointing oil, used in the service of the Jewish sanctuary, was typical of this holy grace and love. Who can doubt it that enters with reverence into the Lord's words prescribing it in the book of Exodus? (Chapter xxx. 23–25, 32, 33.) 'Take unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, of sweet cinnamon half so much . . . and of oil olive an hin: and make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound . . . upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it . . . it is

* See Dissertation VIII.

holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.' The peculiar solemnity of these words, leads us at once to see that we must look deeper than the letter. Who can describe or imitate the composition of that holy anointing, called in scripture, 'the comfort of the Holy Ghost?' What a compound it is, of sweet with bitter, cinnamon with myrrh, softening and refreshing the heart, and, indeed, making the face to shine. Who can set forth the sweetness of the eternal love of the Father, and of the Son, flowing upon his people, through the promised gift of the Holy Ghost? Who can dare to think of this holy anointing without reverence? Who can dare to confound this love with the mere natural affection of love, and so, pour it upon man's flesh, or put any of it upon a stranger? Is it not the Lord's peculiar gift, whereby he quickens and revives the spirit of all the members of his mystical body?

Then David turns to another image, and his words most naturally translated may be read thus, 'As the dew of Hermon; *so is this*, that descendeth upon the mountains of Zion *.' That is, 'As the dews of mount Hermon are most reviving and fertilizing, so is this spiritual dew, descending on the church of God.' There is no fruitfulness towards God, except where this love reigns, and the faith which works by it. Yes, in the church of God, and there only, is this dew felt and enjoyed: 'for there,' adds David, 'the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.' The words, 'commanded the blessing,' lead us at once to look to the power of God, not to the wisdom or will-worship of man. And lest any should imagine that the Lord may give this blessing, and then take it away again, therefore he adds, It is ETERNAL life.

VI.

Hezekiah's prayer and recovery.

Isaiah xxxviii. 2, 3, 'Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore,' &c.

I HAVE often wondered at the meagre way in which commentators have treated this appeal made by Hezekiah to the Lord, and have passed over the deep spiritual instruction which the words of his own writing, recorded in this chapter (verses 10–20), most certainly contain.

Let it be borne in mind that his sickness and recovery took place before the overthrow of Sennacherib, though related after it. For

* The words in Hebrew are clearly elliptical; and, as Scott observes, the ellipsis is best supplied by the words, 'So is this.'—B. G.

his sickness was fifteen years before his death, and therefore in the fourteenth year of his reign. Shalmaneser had then carried the ten tribes captive, and his son Sennacherib had made a successful inroad upon Judah. Hezekiah's faith, eminent as it had been before, began to falter at that time, for he submitted, and paid tribute, and even cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which he had himself dedicated, and therewith bribed Sennacherib to depart. This only availed for a short time; for Sennacherib began to muster a host to renew his invasion (2 Kings xviii. 13–17). Just in this juncture, Hezekiah was struck with mortal disease. So here appeared judgment upon judgment; and that coming upon him when in a faint-hearted and backsliding frame of spirit. It is agreeable to the Lord's dealings with his people in every age, that under such circumstances, their hearts should for a time meditate nothing but terror. This accounts for that fear of death, and sinking of heart under the hand of God, which Hezekiah relates, saying, 'He will cut me off from the thrum (see margin, verse 12): from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' In so dreadful a state of mind, good feelings and bad feelings conflict together; distrust of mercy, and unbelief, which are very bad; spiritual conviction of sin and its demerit, and a struggling faith through all, which are very good. So we may well suppose this child of God wrestled, till Isaiah came and said to him, 'Thou shalt die:' and that most dreadful crisis proved, as in many instances besides, the 'door of hope.' He turned to the wall, and cried to the Lord, and behold, the Lord broke at once the iron bondage of unbelief. He saw, knew, and felt himself to be a true child of God; and entreating the Lord to remember what he himself in his previous trouble had not been able to remember, he cried out in solemn and timely appeal to the Lord, 'Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' The Lord instantly said to Isaiah, 'Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee . . . and deliver this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria,' &c. (2 Kings xx. 5, 6). Before this change, Hezekiah had seen and felt nothing in himself but sin, and destruction from the Lord; now he saw nothing but the Lord's perfect work in himself, and peace and pardon from the Lord. How beautifully he describes this, saying, 'For peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' Moreover he declares his deep feeling of the benefit of these judgments and

mercies, for maintaining spiritual life; 'O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.' Thus also when he adds, The grave and death cannot praise thee; he is not denying the resurrection to life, but referring to his own dreadful feelings before the Lord broke in upon his soul.

VII.

The Lord's perfect servant.

Isaiah xlii. 18–21, 'Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.'

I BELIEVE, with all my heart, that Isaiah, in these words, bids those who know and feel themselves sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, to look to Christ and be saved: for that Christ both humbled himself, and fulfilled the law, that he might save them to the uttermost.

I have often wondered at the perplexed and very insipid interpretations of the 19th and 20th verses, suggested even by learned, sober-minded, and serious divines; as if the words spoke of the moral blindness and obstinacy of the Jewish people, or, as some will have it, of the high priest of that day especially. Whereas if the words are taken as describing Christ in his deep, but voluntary humiliation, they are full of instruction and comfort to the poor and needy in spirit; they blend exceedingly well with the context; exhibit a fulness of gospel doctrine; and require no harshness of construction; as I hope I shall be able to make clear.

It is manifest that in the first verses of this chapter, Christ is both described and promised. This is expressly affirmed in Matthew xii. 17–21. He is set before us in his human nature, as the Lord's chosen servant, upheld and delighted in by him, anointed by the Holy Spirit, the Saviour of the Gentiles; and his tenderness to the poor and needy is set forth thus, He shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. In the 6th verse he is declared to be given by God 'for a covenant of the people,' and also 'for a light of the Gentiles,' as Simeon long afterwards quoted (Luke ii. 32). Then, his mercy to the blind, the prisoners and them that sit in darkness, is set forth; till the prophet, without doubt, praising and singing because of Christ's day seen by him, charges others in verses 10–12 to sing and praise also. Nay he bids even Kedar (i. e. darkness) to lift up the voice, and the inhabitants of the rock to sing.

In the following three verses the Lord's effectual power, both in his mercy and his judgments, is set forth; but again, in the 16th

verse, he returns to declare his mercy to the blind, whom he promises to bring by a way and paths unknown to them, till darkness is made light before them, crooked things straight: and they shall never be forsaken. Such, then, being God's mercy to the blind, we cannot wonder that their attention is challenged in the 18th verse, 'Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.' Also in the first part of the following chapter (but evidently in the same connection), the seed of Christ which are to be gathered from the east and west, the north and south, are called 'the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.' Now in all these passages, the titles that are used, bruised reeds, smoking flax, blind, deaf, prisoners, sitters in darkness, blind having eyes, and deaf having ears, must be taken in a favourable sense. They are all titles descriptive of the humility, the felt weakness, the poverty in spirit, and self-renunciation of the true members of Christ's kingdom. Just as in the New Testament (John ix. 41), where Jesus says to the Pharisees, 'If ye were blind ye should have no sin,' the word 'blind' is evidently used by him in a favourable sense, not as expressing moral darkness, as it clearly does in another place where Christ says, 'Thou blind Pharisee.'

So the words, 'Hear ye deaf; and look, ye blind,' in this 42nd of Isaiah, are an invitation made to humbled hearts to behold the Messiah, the Lord's perfect servant; and it is for their encouragement that the deep humiliation and abasement of Christ is set before them boldly, but truly, in these words, 'Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?'

Can there be the least objection, critically, to our giving to the titles blind and deaf, in these words, a kindred meaning to that which they certainly bear in the context both before and afterwards? If the blind and the deaf there, are humbled and convinced sinners who need the great Physician, the lost sheep whom he came to save; the same terms blind and deaf, applied to Christ, describe, by an easy and natural figure, that Christ was in all things 'made like unto his brethren;' nay, that he was pre-eminent above them all in humiliation and self-abasement. This testimony respecting Christ, embodies the spirit of innumerable testimonies of scripture, such as these, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same' (Heb. ii. 14). 'In all their affliction he was afflicted' (Isa. lxiii. 9). 'His visage was so marred more than any man' (Isa. lii. 14). 'For your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich' (2 Cor. viii. 9). He 'was in all points tempted like as we are' (Heb. iv. 15).

But though, in a figurative sense, the prophet thus describes Christ as blind and deaf above others, yet he declares he was not really and absolutely so. Who is blind, as the Lord's perfect servant? or deaf, as his messenger that he sent? In very deed there were none who saw and heard like him. 'Seeing many

things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.' This is what Christ does in the day of his mercy, even though he is Lord and Judge of all. When he saw his church without spot, and made Balaam say, 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel,'—who was blind like him? When his enemies accused a poor sinner in his presence, and 'he stooped down, and wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not,'—who was deaf like him? (Num. xxiii. 21, and John viii. 6.) This blindness and deafness, to which his mercy compels him, are needful for the salvation of sinners, and most truly found in him, of whom it is nevertheless true, that his eyes are as a flame of fire (Rev. i. 14); nay, that he formed the eye, and shall he not see? He planted the ear, and shall he not hear? (Ps. xciv. 9.)

Let not therefore the bruised reed, the smoking flax, the bound, the deaf, the blind, the dark, be afraid to look to him that they may be saved; for he has become like unto themselves; and instead of the avenging Judge, he becomes the sin offering for his people, and fulfils the law for their justification. 'The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.' Did he not honour the law by his obedience to it as man, and show by his atonement that the law was inviolable? Henceforth God declares, through him, his righteousness; 'that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus' (Rom. iii. 25, 26). It is a blessed thing for those who love the gospel, to see it thus brightly, but simply, shining through the prophecies of the Old Testament.

VIII.

On Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones.

Chapter xxxvii. 1–14, 'The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,' &c.

It is my wish to show simply, what a full, beautiful, and true vision this is of the spiritual regeneration of all Christ's mystical members by the Holy Ghost.

I shall begin by a word or two upon what has been called the spiritual interpretation of scripture. That the prophecies in God's word have a plain outward meaning and fulfilment, important to be regarded in its proper place, I do not deny. This is true of the [illegible] before us. Ezekiel saw and recorded this vision in the [illegible] of the seventy years captivity, and by it, doubtless [illegible] of the believing captives to look forward to their [illegible] own land. Their faith was thus strengthened [illegible] of God; which, though a blessing, is far

short of his spiritual favour. If a hope in their restoration to Canaan was all that they derived from these words, the all was but little, even to them, and still less to us. Nor would it be much more to us, could Ezekiel's words (as perhaps they might in the hands of some devotees to prophetical research) be shown to have relation to the future, and more perfect restoration of the Jews. The first point, and the point to be first sought for, both by Ezekiel and all true believers, and that whether Jews or Gentiles, is to find and enjoy the spiritual love of God in Christ. The scriptures, applied by the Holy Ghost himself, are their guide into the discovery of this love. Being the subjects of grace themselves, and knowing some features at least of the Spirit's work in their own hearts, they can judge of the simple truthfulness of the words of scripture describing them. Their aim is not (as some speak) to accommodate scriptural expressions to spiritual subjects, much less to wrest or force scripture to agree with their own feelings; but finding those feelings faithfully pourtrayed in scripture words, they believe it was the express and gracious design of the Holy Ghost to indite those words for the instruction and establishment of their souls in the faith. Thus scripture becomes the 'hidden manna' wherewith Christ promises to nourish those who overcome (Rev. ii. 17). It is manna, for it feeds their faith, their hope, and their love. It is hidden, for had not the Spirit of God begun to work in their hearts, by giving them spiritual light and feelings, they could never have traced the accordance of those feelings with the words of scripture. The spiritual intent of the Bible will therefore appear perfectly simple, as well as true to them; others may probably denounce it as fanciful and doubtful.

This will be clearly proved in Ezekiel's vision before us; which in verse 11 is declared to have reference to 'the whole house of Israel.' Not only to Judah, but to Ephraim also, as shown in what follows; so far for the outward prophecy: not only to believing Jews, but believing Gentiles too; so far for the spiritual promise. Has not the apostle of the Gentiles testified that if we are Christ's then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise? (Gal. iii. 29.) Therefore do the words of this prophecy of Ezekiel belong to us as well as to them.

Verse 1, 'The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.' It is a humbling discovery, which both Ezekiel and we must find, that by nature we are all 'dry bones,' 'dead in trespasses and sins' (Eph. ii. 1). This cannot be feelingly discovered without grace. The Lord's hand must be upon us, and carry us out, and set us down in the place where this is revealed. And when thus brought down, the power must not cease, but it must be with us as with Ezekiel, who says, He 'caused me to pass by them round about,' as if he implied a measure of reluctance in himself to witness so painful and humbling a sight.

He saw, however, that the innumerable multitude of the bones of Israel were all of them 'very dry;' no spark of life in them. There is abundance of natural life, and intellectual life in men, but, in their firstborn state, no spiritual life at all. And the Lord said, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' and the prophet knowing, that if the Lord had ordained them to life, they would live, replied, 'O Lord God, thou knowest.' Again, the Lord said, 'Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.' This prophesying is the same as preaching the gospel in faith. Not like preaching without faith, for that is no prophecy. But faith turns the preaching into prophesying, and waits for the fulfilment too. 'Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones (not to all bones, but to all the bones of Israel); Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.' I will first grant you this gift, the gift of life, and the work shall be gradually carried on. I will bring up sinews, flesh, and skin upon you; and still again, 'put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.' So Ezekiel obeys the Lord. 'I prophesied as I was commanded:' i. e. I prophesied that through the Lord's power alone all the bones of Israel should live. He neither prophesied this of any other bones, nor told the bones of Israel they could begin, carry on, or complete the life given them. But his prophesying was mighty in its effects. It came to pass that 'as I prophesied, there was a noise'—so there will be a noise, even the voice of the broken law; 'and behold a shaking'—so there will be a shaking, even the trembling of the convinced sinner: and in the midst of this confusion, behold, 'the bones came together, bone to his bone.' Also the sinews, flesh, and skin came up upon them, yet they appeared only as the bodies of slain men. The life which had been already given was in a manner spent, so fresh life was needed. This distinction between the 'dry bones' and the 'slain' bodies is very significant. It shadows forth the real distinction between a man in the state of nature, dead in trespasses and sins, and a man under the power of grace, when the commandment, which was ordained to life, he finds to be unto death. But here again the Lord's power comes in. 'Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, Son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' It is as much as to appeal to the Holy Ghost and to say, Thou wilt surely come again, and come more abundantly, to complete the work begun, and to raise these slain to life. And so it was. 'And they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army,' even the army of the Lord of hosts; for this army is the whole church militant. Then said the Lord, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.' But let us especially take notice of that state of fear and humiliation to which all this house of Israel is brought, above and beyond all others,—'Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off

for our parts.' Others too often think and say that as for their parts, they can believe and live and do many good works; but Israel says, As for our parts, we are cut off; our bones dried, and our hope lost. But this 'voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace,' enters into the ears of the Lord of hosts (Jer. xxx. 5), and he says yet again to his prophet, 'Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves.' I will save you from your deepest feelings of death; I will cause you to come up, hopeless as your case seems, and 'bring you into the land of Israel,' even into the kingdom of heaven upon the earth, whereof Canaan is the chosen type. 'And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.' Not only that he is the promising, but also the performing God.

Reader, the main question with each of us is, Do we believe this work of God to be necessary to our salvation, as Christ has said, 'Ye must be born again?' Do we, with reverence and love, thank him for working this salvation in the midst of the earth? (Ps. lxxiv. 12.) Have we confessed and lamented like these bones of Israel? Have we ever believed and prophesied that for Christ's sake, not our own, we should see life? Have we feared and trembled? Has the insensibility of our natural state been roused and changed by the entrance of grace? Have we prayed, cried, waited for, believed in, and perhaps even prophesied of, the power of the Holy Ghost to cause us to stand up at the commandment of the Captain of our salvation, and to fight the good fight of faith? If so, all these words of Ezekiel will be felt by us, as simply and truthfully setting forth the things we have known and believed, handled and loved. If not, this will only appear to us as a forced or strained interpretation. In the one case the word will cherish our faith, and we shall find it to be the 'hidden manna.' In the other case the word speaks only to us in a parable, the inward power and truth of which we do not, cannot, and will not understand.

IX.

The believer's freedom through Christ from the condemnation of the law.

Matthew v. 25, 26, 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.'

Luke xii. 58, 59, 'When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale

thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.'

Our Lord evidently spoke these words (identical in the spirit of them) twice over in the course of his ministry. For in Matthew's Gospel they form part of the sermon on the mount; in Luke's Gospel they are recorded as spoken a year or two later. This repetition of the words may show to us their importance. The Lord would impress them upon us, 'line upon line.'

In the letter of them they evidently refer to the process of human judgment as administered by the powers that be. In the spirit of them they contain a most serious caution to all who have ears to hear, veiled, according to our Lord's custom, in a simple parable.

We can be at no loss to determine what this caution is if we consider the words as illustrated by the context of them in Matthew v, verses 17 and onward. For there Jesus Christ opens up, as no teacher ever did before him, the spirituality of the 'exceeding broad' commandment of the law. He declares expressly that in the judgment of Almighty God a licentious look is adultery, and a rancorous word deserves hell fire. What then must be the guilt of the sins of a whole lifetime, and how fearful the condemnation it incurs! This dreadful truth, believed in a quickened conscience, is that application of the curse of the broken law which no flesh can endure, and which makes the divine law, when it really comes alone into the sinner's heart, his most dreadful, and yet his most holy adversary. Yet the substance of this law is love, and nothing else. It is all fulfilled in perfect love: and therefore would be not only without terror, but itself the object of love to those who never sinned.

In the dispensation under which man has been placed since the first promise of the gospel in Eden to this very day, this dreadful curse is not alone in the earth: and if felt by despairing sinners as alone, still it does not abide alone; for if there is one spark of hope through the Mediator, the curse is not alone. How should we pray with David that this curse abide not on us alone: 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure' (Ps. xxxviii. 1). But the scriptures abundantly testify, what also all God's people, sooner or later, find most true, that the application of the law is dreadful. For it is written, 'The law is not of faith,' and therefore it is no office of the law to bring faith. 'By the law is the knowledge of sin,' and therefore it is no office of the law to reveal salvation to sinners. An unregenerate man is likely enough to be at ease, because 'alive without the law;' but, should the law enter, should the commandment come, it makes his sin to revive, and himself to die; and therefore except grace come in, he can feel no hope at all (Rom. vii. 9). The law then, which reveals wrath, but cannot give life, is in and by itself, at all times, the adversary of all men, in that 'all have sinned.'

As therefore our Lord speaks of an 'adversary' in our way, while

opening up the terrors of the law, we may well regard him as pointing out that law as our adversary. He represents this adversary as being urgent in his claim against us; for he says, Agree with him quickly. He represents this adversary as closely following us up, as being with us in the way, and going with us to the magistrate, i. e. to the judgment seat. He represents this adversary as one whose claim against us he ratifies with his own mouth, declaring that except agreement be made our case is indeed desperate. He intimates also that 'at any time' this exaction may be made. We may consider his words as equivalent to these, 'Beware, lest at any time, this adversary, the law, remit thee to the Judge of all, and he deliver thee to the officer Death, or deliver thee into the hand of Satan, and thou be cast into hell. I say unto thee—I, the Mediator, say unto thee, the last mite of this dreadful debt shall be there exacted.' Here the Mediator himself speaks with the adversary's voice, according to one of the most awful passages in God's word, declaring that the wicked shall say, Fall on us, ye rocks, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. vi. 16). This shows us, or ought to show us, that the Son, though the Saviour, is holy as God is holy: and this holiness in God, whether in Father, Son, or Spirit, is unchangeable and immutable. Whether he will create a world or not is the act of his free volition, but whether he will be holy or not, and so enforce the demand of his holy law, is not so, for the holiness is necessary to his nature, as Hart says,

'Sin to pardon without blood,
Never in his nature stood.'

Yet though Christ, in part of the words I am dwelling upon, speaks with the law's voice, in part of them he speaks as the gracious Mediator indeed. 'A days-man,' as Job says, between God and man, 'who can lay his hand upon us both.' He speaks as a friendly adviser to us, 'Agree,' says he, 'with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him.' He would not have said this had there been no way opened for an agreement between us and our adversary. The way is through himself, who being one with God, and himself the source and giver of the law, yet became man and was 'made under the law,' fulfilled it in his whole life and death, yet endured the curse (was made the curse of it) as though he was the transgressor: and when satisfaction had been fully made he rose from the dead, and became the author of eternal salvation to all believers. They become believers when he gives them faith, a gift which the law never gives. This offering of Christ, presented by faith, will bring about the required agreement with their adversary; it will infallibly and in every case do it; and since Christ tells them expressly to agree with their adversary quickly, he thereby authorizes them to use the only means which will bring about that agreement. The first and greatest secret of the spiritual life is, through faith given, always to remember and to be obeying Christ's word, 'Agree with thine adversary.' Do this 'quickly,' says the Lord; be not

slack in it, but diligent—'give diligence' to do it; for thine adversary is jealous and terrible, and has his right against thee from God himself. Agree with him 'whiles thou art in the way with him.' For we are all of us in the way to the judgment, and this great adversary is always with us. We naturally know and cleave to no religion except that of the law. Hence the necessity that we should always be taught to know that agreement with our adversary comes by faith in the gospel, not by obedience to the law. It may be that whiles we are in the way with this adversary, he may suddenly put our souls under arrest, for the expression used by Christ, as quoted in Luke, seems to imply as much, 'Give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him.' We must nevertheless remember that this deliverance from our adversary, is always and only by the patient exercise of the same faith as that by which we 'agree' with him. What a dreadful fire will be brought even into the believer's conscience, if he should look for any other deliverance from the law except that which faith brings. May we know also, that faith itself is neither the deliverer nor the deliverance, but Christ alone is both. Faith is given to bring us to him, and to make him all in all. Faith must be ever working, because indwelling sin is ever working: we are always sinning in our carnal nature, therefore there is always fuel in us to kindle the fire of our great adversary. This makes the Lord caution us to beware, lest 'at any time' the adversary should deliver us to the Judge.

But perhaps some may say, that to suppose Christ to speak to his people in such rousing and alarming exhortations as these, is to set him forth as the teacher of the law rather than of the gospel, and will either bring his people into bondage, or keep them in it. This is not so. For there is the greatest possible difference between the law saying to us, 'Pay me that thou owest,' and Christ saying to us, 'Agree with thine adversary quickly.' The law commands, and gives us no power to obey, and so leaves us under the curse. Christ commands, and 'his commandment is life everlasting,' for grace comes with it, and we obey. Christ and the law command the same thing, for example, that we love God. But the law's command reveals the enmity of our hearts, and condemns us for it; but Christ, having satisfied the law, gives us the love which he commands. So he gives faith also, by which we agree with our adversary. Indeed it is not the will of God that believers should walk in bondage, but find liberty: yet if Christ be obscured, the fire of our adversary will be kindled, and bondage will ensue. Seeing that as long as the believer lives, indwelling sin lives in him, he is always liable to unbelief, and so to the feeling sense of wrath. A reverent feeling of this danger will show him the blessedness of attending to Christ's counsel, 'Agree with thine adversary quickly.' Without this living faith in exercise, he cannot walk in liberty, but in fear and bondage of spirit.

There is, however, still one point more, necessary to be known, in order to show the full spiritual weight of the caution given by the

Lord to his people, in the words I am considering. Christ says that they must beware lest the Judge deliver them to the officer, and they be cast into prison. What! many will exclaim, are these words addressed to the believer? Is there any danger that the believer should be cast into hell? I reply No: certainly every believer shall be saved, by virtue of the promise, and unchangeable covenant of grace. But the believer may be cast, through sin, as Jonah was, into a hell in his own feelings. Jonah cried 'out of the belly of hell,' and verily he thought that the earth with her bars was about him for ever. But looking once more to the holy temple, he was delivered; and 'for ever' proved only of three days continuance. Just so it will be with other believers in a like case. Deliver themselves they cannot, but are come to their very 'last mite,' their 'uttermost farthing,' and are as poor as poor can be; and then, behold, they are not come to the mount which burned with fire . . . but unto Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel (Heb. xii. 18, 24).

This consideration of Christ's serious words in Matt. v. 25, 26, and Luke xii. 58, 59, naturally leads our minds to another but kindred point, viz. the difference between the law and the gospel, and the relation of the believer to them both. I do not advance any new doctrine upon this subject, but sensible of its great practical importance, as well as its vital connection with all really experimental religion, I desire, if the Lord graciously enable me, to express a few things of which I trust in a measure I have both seen the truth and felt the value.

To clear the way, I begin by defining what I mean by the law. I mean essentially one commandment only, to which Christ himself repeatedly traces up every other law and commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' This is that law which is most simply and fully of universal authority, and never once has been nor can be set aside. All holy creatures, whether in heaven, earth, or elsewhere, fulfil it with delight; and all who have transgressed it, and become sinners, have rendered themselves obnoxious to its eternal curse. Those among the angels who broke it, left their first estate, and are reserved unto judgment. Adam fulfilled it gladly and freely before his disobedience; but such is the effect of the entrance of sin, that one act of disobedience disabled him and all his posterity from ever fulfilling it by their own free will again. This is a great mystery, such as no man fully understands, but it must be reverently believed. This law is a plumbline or measuring line, in the Lord's hand (Amos vii. 7, Zech. ii. 1); it determines the transgression, and measure thereof, in all families of the earth, Jews, Pagans, or Christians. There is also a second commandment, which Christ has said 'is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' This springs out of the first. Christ expounds

'thy neighbour' to include 'thine enemy,' and so lays down this as the full rule of this law, Thou shalt love thine enemies. Yet Almighty God, and therefore Christ, who is God, sanctions human authority in the punishment of criminals; and (as I suppose we may reverently say) 'because of the hardness of our hearts,' he in certain instances sanctions war. He also expressly commanded the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites, and Saul to destroy Amalek. But loving obedience to God is so heavenly and so genial a principle, that it will never bring a man whom it influences to a morose spirit or a hard heart. It was the morose and obdurate Saul who spared Agag; it was the benign and gracious Samuel who hewed him in pieces. Thus the commandment, enjoining love to our neighbour, owing to the entrance of sin into the world, is subject to some variation; but the commandment enjoining supreme love to God is not so, nor can be. Even when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, obedience to that command from supreme love to God became Abraham's first duty.

God has given many laws. Some, binding on the Jews only, and that for a time, as the ceremonial law. Others of a fuller authority, and binding (at least generally, and in their spirit, binding) on us no less than the Jews, as being moral in their nature. This is eminently the case with the Ten Commandments; the general scope of which is love to God and man. He appointed also for the government of the Jews, a judicial law; and mingled, even in the Ten Commandments given from Sinai, some traces of his national covenant with them, reminding them of their deliverance out of Egypt. Now that national covenant, and those judicial laws, as well as the ceremonial law, became binding upon them as long and as far as God intended, by virtue of the obligation of this first law upon them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God supremely. For this last reason also, the above temporary or national laws are not binding upon us; because God, whom we must love supremely, frees us from obligation to them. So in using this freedom, we obey God.

This law of love to God, then, contains within it, all spiritual worship, reverence, and service. It enjoins all holiness, and condemns all sin. For, 'He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law' (Rom. xiii. 8), and, 'Sin is the transgression of the law' (1 John iii. 4). We can neither conceive nor perform a higher or more perfect holiness than by full obedience to this law, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' But, as the breach of this law brings the intolerable curse, the Lord has never given it alone to man, since the day of his fall. He did not give it alone from mount Sinai; for he mingled it with grace, saying, I am the Lord thy God; and again, I show mercy unto thousands of them that love me. It is wonderful to notice how, in that 20th chapter of Exodus, the glory of the gospel may be said to glitter through the darkness of the law. For the Lord says in it, 'In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.' Nevertheless the Israelites who heard it, could not

endure the word spoken, and entreated to hear it no more without a mediator, wherein the Lord said they did well. It is plain, therefore, that though the Lord did not give them the law alone, yet they heard it alone, for they could not mix faith with it; and it is as true of us as of them, that whenever the word is heard so as to enter without the exercise of faith in Christ, it becomes the condemning law; and it is death so to hear it. For wherever God commands, and gives the sinner no power to obey, that, in the quickened conscience, is death. Hence, one and the same commandment may be found either unto life or unto death. For example, when Christ said to Matthew, 'Follow me,' and Matthew 'rose up, left all, and followed him,' that was life—not law in his conscience, but gospel. But when to beat down all self-righteousness, he said to the young ruler, 'Follow me,' and the young ruler 'went away grieved,' that was death—not gospel in his conscience, but law. The end of the commandment, in Matthew's case, was to teach him that Christ was his Saviour; the end of the commandment, in the young ruler's case, was to teach him that all his doings to attain eternal life were fruitless. Christ preached the gospel to Matthew, and preached the law to the young ruler, in one and the self-same word.

We have many laws, and many gospel promises in the Old Testament, but every law therein, when fulfilled through the promise, becomes gospel and not law. So we have many laws and many gospel promises in the New Testament, yet if those promises do not reveal mercy, and bring grace unto obedience, they become law and not gospel. Thus the command to believe, spoken to him who has faith from the Lord, is the very essence of the gospel; but spoken to him who cannot believe and so continues, it is the condemning law.

When the Lord describes the effect and power of the covenant of grace in Jeremiah xxxi. 33, 34, it is this way, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' The fulfilment of this promise is the fulfilment of the gospel received by grace, through faith. Comparing, or rather combining, the above words with many other scriptures, we are taught from them the fulness of the work of the divine Spirit in the hearts of God's elect. The enmity of their natural hearts, which is not and cannot be subject to the law of love, is counteracted by a divine principle created anew in their hearts. This divine principle is holy as God is holy, and the law of love is engraven in it. Nevertheless, the believer, who is the subject of this work, finds another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members (Rom. vii. 23). He finds the effects of these opposite laws in himself, and that as long as he lives; and all the conflict and misery he endures arises from the opposition between these two laws. Sometimes his hands are strengthened, and 'Israel prevails;' sometimes his hands hang down, and 'Amalek prevails:' but victory is always and only found in his going out of

self into Christ; and when he trusts in his own righteousness, or in his own meagre self-wrought holiness, he is as surely defeated.

The privilege of the true believer is to find that the Lord is the Lord his righteousness (Jer. xxiii. 6), and that Christ is made of God unto him wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30). Could he always abide in the power and joy of this truth, the description given of the new Jerusalem in Revelations xxi, would always express his happy state. 'I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' But the humbling truth being this, that the believer, as long as he lives, carries the body of sin and death about with him, it is not possible that he should always rejoice in this unutterable glory. This body of sin has unbelief in it, and when unbelief works the glory of Christ is obscured. Then guilt must be felt, and that holy thing which is wrought of God in the heart, finds itself, though not willingly, subject to bondage. Then the man who is the subject of this change, is in a state to feel again the wrath of the broken law, which, however, never sanctifies him. He neither feels peace nor holiness, till Christ dispels this darkness, leads this captivity captive, and causes him again neither to feel, nor to have need to feel, the bondage of the broken law, because the whole law itself, the law of love, is written in his heart. Such being his continual case, he desires, whether in peace or in conflict, to look to Christ to enlighten and teach him, not to the law. He says to Christ, and not to the law, What wouldest thou have me to do? The rule of the law has fire in it, which the sin in him may kindle at any time; but the law fulfilled in Christ, the law in the heart of Christ, the law satisfied, well-pleased, and magnified by Christ's obedience and atonement, has no fire in it, for Christ both covers sin and subdues it. In this law then, which abides in Christ's heart, not his own, the believer finds his delight, and meditates in it day and night. As an example of what I mean, let us consider the case of Abraham—the believing Abraham—when God said to him, Take now thy son, thine only son, and offer him up for a burnt offering (Gen. xxii. 2). Did he go to the law for instruction? He knew, without doubt, that God had said in Noah's time, The blood of your lives I will require at your hands (Gen. ix. 5). But what light or strength would that law have afforded him in the hour of his perplexity and anguish? Had he followed it in the letter, he would have forsaken the holy law of God written in his heart, and have been disobedient to the Lord. Without doubt he went at once to the Lord, and not to the law. Faith in him who had said, 'Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,' taught him the right course, and fulfilled all obedience in him. So must it be with his spiritual seed, as it was with himself; and the faith of both being the same, their practice will be the same also.

This question evidently bears upon another, which has been a fruitful source of controversy in modern divinity; viz. Is it right to say that the law is the believer's rule of life?

That many sound authors, especially Scotch divines, e. g. Ralph Erskine, have continually used this expression without any objectionable meaning, I freely concede. Opposition to it, however, on gospel grounds, was made (and I believe first made) by the late Mr. Huntington, who has defended his principles on the point very clearly and boldly in his voluminous works, and that with a rich fervour of experimental godliness, wherein those works abound. The principle was violently opposed by many, on the alleged ground that it was a principle favouring practical Antinomianism; and Mr. Huntington, by many, was strenuously, but unjustly, accused of being a practical Antinomian himself. Some, indeed, objected to it merely on critical grounds. 'Every law,' they say, 'is a rule: and therefore the law of love, which the believer fulfils, must be a rule.' This may be granted, and withal it may be taken as the reason which induced writers like Ralph Erskine, to contradict in the letter an author such as Huntington, with whom he would have agreed in spirit. But the principle, as avowed and defended by Mr. Huntington, was not a question of words but of things; and in this latter view it is worthy of the attention of all who desire to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. It may be allowed that the words used by Mr. Huntington, must be defined with that latitude which the ambiguity, inherent in all language, requires, otherwise they may imply a contradiction; but the principle itself is independent of the mere expression of it, and, when scripturally explained, and scripturally limited, may, I believe, be regarded as an important principle.

Many writers, more or less evangelical, who have controverted Mr. Huntington's statements, seem to me to have done so in a very legal spirit. They do not appear to arrive, either in their teaching or their experience, to the point of a believer's real emancipation from bondage—the bondage of the broken law—through the manifestation of Christ, working in him both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. This state, if we may believe an inspired apostle, is so far from bringing him to practical Antinomianism, that it brings him to work out his own salvation 'with fear and trembling' (Phil. ii. 12, 13). That is, as surely we must understand it, with the reverence of godly fear, and a trembling at the majesty and glory of the Saviour, revealed in saving mercy. 'They shall fear and tremble for all the goodness . . . that I procure' unto them (Jer. xxxiii. 9).

But writers who do not in their experience and teaching press forward to this state, cannot, as I conceive, rightly judge of the real meaning of Mr. Huntington, and the importance of it. When inculcating their own view, they represent the believer as one who is very much afraid of being deluded by fancy, and, in fact, more under the mere guidance of sober reason and judgment, than the subject

of an unmistakable and supernatural work of divine power. They therefore represent him, when difficulties or perplexities occur, as going to the word of God, and endeavouring to trace out the right line for his conduct by a comparison of its several statements. And if this making the law his rule of life, be accompanied with fervent prayer, it is presumed that he may have a humble confidence that he shall not be deceived. I reply that it is a good thing always to be afraid of being deluded by fancy, most especially in our religion, which is our highest interest. It is also a good thing for any one who is thus afraid, to go to the word of God, and a still better thing to do so with fervent prayer; for if these things be done by the power of one hidden grain of the Lord's divine faith, it is the beginning of our seeking God, if haply we may feel after him and find him,—and will end in salvation; because Christ has said that the mountain itself shall be removed from before us by the power of a mustard-seed faith. But if the man is satisfied that he has gone far enough, because he thus goes in fear to the word of God, and prays; if his aim is, by doing this better and better, to fit himself for heaven; then it is plain that the deadly veil of self-righteousness is not yet taken from his heart. His hope is in works. He tries to repent of his bad works, but puts a confidence in what he hopes are good works. He is not brought to the real entrance into the divine word which says, 'As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.' But find the man who has felt, in some real measure, this dreadful part of the truth, and you will find he is afraid even of looking to find hope in his going to God's word and praying. His hope—when it comes—is that Saviour who has fulfilled all righteousness for him; the Spirit who creates the new man, which fulfils the law, in him; the Father who, by free election and loving adoption, will lift him from the dunghill, to be an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. Blessed is the man whose hope the Lord is. (Ps. cxiii. 7, Gal. iv. 5–7, Rom. viii. 15–17, Jer. xvii. 7.)

When favoured to have communion by faith with this great God of salvation, he is not misled by fancy, and he knows he is not; and will go boldly to his Saviour, and not to the law, as I showed above that Abraham did, when, by the will of God, obedience to the letter of the law would have misled him. The child of God delights to walk in the steps of the faith of his father Abraham, and thus will cordially admit, that there is a real sense in which the law is not the believer's rule of life.

There is, however, frequently set before us in the scriptures, an important *limitation* to this principle; which, when kept in view, guards it from being perverted; and shows that, rightly understood, it affords not the least encouragement to the practical Antinomian. If the two passages at the head of this brief treatise (Matt. v. 25, 26, and Luke xii. 58, 59) be understood, as I have already explained them, each of them affords a compendious view of the limitation I speak of. The Lord bids the believer stand in awe

of that inexorable adversary, always in the way with him, even God's holy law. The limitation I speak of, I will thus define. Complete freedom from the curse of the law belongs to the believer, not as he is a man, but only as he is a believing man. As he is a man, and still partaker of a sinful nature, he is liable to the oppression of the law still. As he is a believing man, and the more his faith abounds, the more is that oppression from the law removed far off from him; as the prophet Joel writes, though on another point, 'I will remove far off from you the northern army.' The greater the believer's freedom from the curse of the law, the greater his love, and so the greater his holiness; which shows the greatness of the error very common amongst men, that the true joy and peace in believing, are less favourable to holiness, than uncertainty, slavish fear, and bondage. But whenever the holiness, the love, and the freedom decline, and the 'old man,' which had been, as it were, dead and buried both, begins to put forth its sinful concupiscence, behold the galling, binding, cursing power of the law begins to revive also. The reality before felt in faith, gives place to unbelief. Again the law reveals sin: and we know what the testimony of the apostle Paul is, respecting the action of the law when it brings sin to light. It revives sin (Rom. vii. 9); it increases sin (Rom. v. 20)—and this though (or rather, because) it is itself most holy (Rom. vii. 12). 'The motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful' (Rom. vii. 5, 13).

No wonder that as the believer loves God and holiness, he must dread the return of this action of the law; and knowing, as he does, that indwelling sin is always present with him, he never, as long as he lives, dares face the law without a mediator. When Israel, at Sinai, cried out, 'Let not God speak with us,' the Lord replied that they spoke well—'O that there were such an heart in them:' and in every true believer, whether of them or us, there is such an heart. The heart will go with the mouth; 'Let not God (i.e. an absolute God) speak with us, lest we die.' Thus the believer's dealings, as I said before, will always be with Christ. And the closer his walk with God, the more he feels the necessity of ever fleeing from the law; and the more help he finds to do so. When remiss in walking with God, Christ withdraws, and the law, with its terrors, advances. This is grievous. He would avoid it, but he cannot. He sometimes, through indwelling sin, tries to avoid it by a presumption which he then calls faith, but it is not living faith, so that, sooner or later, he is driven to fall down once more before God, as a poor, needy, yea lost sinner, and wait for Christ's promised return.

The principle then, that the law is not the rule of the believer's

life, when limited by the admission, that, except he is walking with God, he cannot be thus freed from the law, is an essential part of true gospel liberty. Many humble and happy believers have experienced it in their heart, though unable to reason about it in their natural understanding. Yes, and many, I doubt not, have denied it in the letter, especially as they have been taught of man that they must deny it, who have enjoyed it in the spirit, being taught so to do by that Man who is 'as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' The martyr, who clapped his hands in the fire, exclaiming, 'None but Christ! none but Christ!' doubtless understood it well.

I believe Mr. Huntington to have been a great man of God, and a heart-searching, establishing minister of gospel truth; nevertheless the Lord suffers blemishes in such, that none should glory in man. And I believe it may be said of him, that he was not always sufficiently cautious tenderly to guard his expression of the principle he so boldly advocated, and with so rich an experience of its truth. Hence many delighted in hearing him, who never followed Christ as he did. Still, not a few of those for whom he 'travailed in birth till Christ was formed in them,' became eminent for real godliness; who, to my knowledge, have not yet entirely passed away from the church militant, though I am writing more than fifty years after his death.

But there is another minister of the gospel, whose influence has been far more extensively felt in the church than Mr. Huntington's; I mean Martin Luther. I feel assured that in spirit these two agree in one. In Luther's works we find the believer's freedom from the law, and yet the continual wrestling of his faith, to preserve that freedom undefiled, most fully and most effectively declared. Luther's boldness indeed is startling, but so evidently under the control of true godliness, that his works everywhere may be said to contain the best and fullest antidote to their own excesses. The power with which he describes the killing effect of the law, the reigning of the believer in Christ above the law, the believer's refusing by faith—and never except by faith—to return to subjection under the law, may appear to those who are destitute of spiritual life, to be only poetical or rhetorical flourishes: but to the exercised believer himself, they are felt as most serious and most consoling delineations of divine truth. John Bunyan, in his 'Grace Abounding,' tells us how he found this out, when he met, exposed on a book-stall, an old copy of Luther on the Galatians, and adds, 'To this day I prefer that book, next to the Bible, for all afflicted consciences.'

I will now bring this Essay to a close, by a very brief summary of its contents.

The believer walking with God, is not under the law. He possesses the true holiness of love, but it has become his, not by his obeying the law, much less by his endeavours to obey it, but by falling down as a lost sinner before Christ, and receiving Christ's free gift. The

law, which could not give him life at first, for it only slew him, cannot cherish his life when given, by becoming his rule. If you say that the believer, being now holy, the law is on his side, and will only bless him: remember that the believer is also a sinner, and for that indwelling sin the law will curse him. Yea, and the law will make him begin to feel that curse, whenever he begins to forsake Christ, 'the fountain of living waters.' Christ's imputed righteousness must therefore be his continual refuge, and the law satisfied by Christ, is the only law he can delight in. It is also Christ, by the Holy Spirit, that creates him anew to holiness, and so becomes his sanctification, no less truly, though in another way, than he becomes his righteousness. He looks only to Christ for all: he abides only in Christ, that he may possess and enjoy all. His whole spiritual life is expressed in the words of Solomon's Song, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste' (chap. ii. 3).

X.

On the prayer of the disciples during the storm on the Lake.

Matthew viii. 23–26. Mark iv. 37–40. Luke viii. 23–25.

These passages compared afford a remarkable illustration of Christ's words on another occasion, 'According to your faith be it unto you.' The main features of the event substantially agree in each Gospel, but a difference is found in the words of the prayer addressed by the disciples to Christ, and in the reply given them by Christ. This difference may be accounted for thus, that some of the disciples (according to the actings of their faith at the time) addressed Christ one way, others of them another way. Christ replied to each according to the state of their mind.

Luke relates their prayer thus, 'Master, master, we perish.' Here is the expression of pure fear, and Christ gently replies, 'Where is your faith?' as if he would stir up their hidden faith. Mark relates the prayer thus, 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?' Here is a want of love and affiance, and therefore of the faith that worketh by love. So Christ gently rebukes, and says, 'Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?' Matthew relates the prayer thus, 'Lord, save us; we perish.' Here is the right prayer of faith: and Christ answers it thus, 'O ye of little faith, why are ye fearful?' That is, he assures them of their safety, and takes fear away. The Lord grant us this last.

XI.

On the leper.

Matthew viii. 1-4, 'When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.'

THIS leper was evidently awed in spirit, by discerning Christ's power and majesty. We may be assured that he had divine faith, and that he now sees 'the King in his beauty.' Still we may fairly suppose, that it was with him, as it continually is with us, even that neither he nor we, always comprehend the fulness of our prayers, when we pray in the Spirit. The leper's short but effectual prayer was this, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;' which words contain the latent principle of more gospel truth than probably the leper himself knew it to contain, when he pronounced the words. As he or as we advance in knowledge and experience, we may be favoured, as it were, to look at such words through a magnifying glass, and see all that fulness which, even before we knew it, lay wrapped up in it as the germ in the seed. It only needs the instruction attained by patient continuance in faith, to bring us to pray thus in the full extent of the words. This extent is shown thus, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost' (1 Cor. xii. 3). The man who knows the divinity of Christ in a rich experience, will say to him, 'Lord, if thou wilt,' indeed. The will of Christ is absolute, for it is the will of God; and if we pray in submission to his will, we love him already, which proves that he has first loved us, and therefore will love us for ever. This is a great encouragement to the needy sinner, who having learnt in a measure that Jesus is the way, feels a hope in personally addressing him, both as God and as Mediator. It is easy to do this when the sun shines; but who can do it easily in the day of trouble, and when the curse of the broken law is as clouds and thick darkness? Still let us observe that Jesus, in the case of this leper, shows us that he is above the law. The law says, Touch not the leper, or you are unclean; but Christ boldly touched the leper, and so far from becoming unclean himself, made the leper clean. He also sent the leper to the priest, for he knew that so perfect was the cure, that the priest would be constrained to pronounce him clean. See also what Christ does: he shows himself above the law, and yet honours the law, by sending the healed leper to offer the appointed sacrifice. Even when he annulled the law by touching the leper, he honoured the law, and also constrained the law (by the priest's mouth) to declare that the leper whom he touches is clean indeed.

XII.

The fulness of Christ.

John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.'

THIS is a blessed word for all to whom Isaiah cries, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' The simplest construction of the words in Greek, being this, 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace answerable to (his) grace.' Consider then, weary and heavy laden sinner, the various graces that you need. There is the grace of faith, of hope, of love, of brokenness of heart, of abhorrency of sin, of patience, long-suffering, meekness, perseverance, and many more. Are not these, every one of them, and all others, found in Jesus without measure? Fear not then; come to him, for they are all free gifts; ask for them out of 'his fulness.' True it is that except you are a sinner, a real sinner, not a self-esteemed saint, and feel your own emptiness, you have no room in your heart for his fulness. But the more empty you are under a feeling sense of your own ignorance, hardness of heart, and unbelief, the more you must expect and receive from him who is always most full. Do you need faith? Ask for a measure of it answerable to the Spirit of faith which is in him. Do you need hope, love, brokenness of heart, abhorrency of sin, patience, long-suffering, meekness, perseverance, and many more? Ask for a measure of them all, answerable to the immeasurable fulness of them every one in him.

XIII.

The believer's delight in the law of God.

Romans vii. 22–25, 'For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.'

WHAT can be more certain than that the man whose delight is in God's law, whose misery it is that sin works in him, and whose Rock is God in Christ, whom he gratefully adores, is the true regenerate believer? Whether, therefore, the apostle Paul, in the concluding verses of Romans vii, speaks of himself, and that, after his conversion (as I believe, without question, he does); or personates another man, as the advocates of fleshly perfection are compelled to suppose,—still he describes the character of a regenerate believer.

The first thing he avows is a certain holy delight: 'I delight,' says he, 'in the law of God after the inward man.' I delight in it,

i. e. It is *sweet* to me, the word translated 'I delight' being derived from ἡδύς, *sweet*. This is the same as what David says of the blessed man, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord;' and again, 'The law of the Lord is perfect . . . sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb' (Psalms i. and xix).

The word 'law' may be taken, with a certain latitude, to signify the whole of God's revealed will, and so to include the gospel; yet even so it cannot be said to be the delight of any natural man, for his delight is in 'fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.' Much less can 'the law of God' in its strict sense be the delight, or anything but the fear and dread of all sinners who are under it. Before delight in it can be felt, faith must be given them to believe stedfastly that Christ has redeemed them from the curse of the law, that he justifies them by his righteousness, and creates a holy nature in them by his Spirit. Let these things be so, and the man can say, 'I delight in the law of God.' But then, adds the apostle, this delight is only in the 'inward man,' or in that holy nature created by the Spirit, for nothing else in a man is conformable to the law of God, but contrary to it. It may, however, be most truly asserted that, in the regenerate believer, there is a real delight in the law, and this delight is most holy. But then, as the apostle proceeds to declare, in the same person the motions of sin still work, which causes in him, not delight, but deep misery, yet a misery which is most holy also. 'I see,' says the apostle, 'another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.' Now what must be the feelings with which the inward man views these insidious workings and encroachments of sin? Can it consent to them or endure them? No. It cries out, 'O wretched man that I am!' and unable to accomplish a deliverance, looks, out of self, for the Deliverer, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' The allusion, supposed to be made here, to the dreadful penal sentence of fastening a living man to a dead corpse, adds intensity to this vehement exclamation. We should remember that the more intense the misery of the state described, the greater is the holiness of him enduring it. Just before the apostle says, 'I delight;' but his delight cannot neutralize his misery. Though delighting in the law of the Lord, still he is obliged to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am!' I am sure that neither the Pharisee nor the Antinomian can attain to this holy misery, any more than to this holy delight. Both must result alone from the pure and holy grace of the divine Spirit.

But there remains one further word to be considered, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' I, who delight in the divine law, and whose intense misery is sin, am thankful to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the gift of his only begotten Son. Here is faith; and the faith working by love, which brings forth the thanksgiving. Through this divine mediator, the sin

which is my misery cannot prove my destruction; and the holy law I delight in, is not against me, but for me. The just God is the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26).

XIV.

The thorn in the flesh.

2 Corinthians xii. 2–10, 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) . . . how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words. . . . And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,' &c.

THIS passage is a very instructive one, as setting forth the humiliation which will accompany a true experience of the grace of God.

The apostle, in order to vindicate his authority against light-minded and ambitious professors in Corinth, relates in the third person (as if it referred to another person) a divine vision with which he had been favoured. It would seem that he had but sparingly mentioned it to others, deeply feeling that he must refrain from all boasting.

One circumstance has long appeared probable to me; others must consider it as they shall feel led. It is this. The vision was granted fourteen years before the epistle recording it was written. Now, as Dr. Paley ingeniously proves in his Horæ Paulinæ, the epistle must have been written just as the apostle reached Macedonia, as related Acts xx. 1. This was A.D. 60; and fourteen years before, being A.D. 46, was just the date of Paul's visit to Lystra, where the unbelieving Jews, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing that he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up (Acts xiv. 19, 20). May we not suppose that this very moment of tumult and danger, was the moment when the Lord vouchsafed him this great vision? It is agreeable to the Lord's dealings in other cases, as to the martyr Stephen; nor are there wanting, even in modern times, instances of a similar kind. It accounts well for the expression used by the apostle, 'whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;' i. e. whether he had been really dead and was restored to life, or otherwise, he could not tell, being probably quite unconscious of outward things. To suppose this, gives us an encouraging view of the Lord's dealings, who can thus counteract the malice of his people's enemies, and make the day of their tribulation a day of rich mercy.

The vision was wonderful, as expressed by the apostle in these words, I 'heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.' But had the apostle been left at ease, to boast of such a singular favour, he might by-and-by have been 'puffed up,'

for he was a man of like passions with us. Every believer has within him, while in this world, the old corrupt nature as well as the new. Therefore he must expect, as Paul found, the purging hand of the Lord upon him in many trials, for Christ says, Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. Therefore the Lord, in the case before us, ordained for his servant 'a thorn in the flesh,' i. e. afflictions in the body (which 'flesh,' as here used, simply signifies); and by these afflictions, the risings of pride in him were counteracted. Why should any suppose that this 'thorn' comprised only one trial? It surely comprised many: all of them working as one, to keep the apostle from resting in this world, and causing him to attend to the words, 'Arise, depart, for this is not your rest.' This 'thorn' was grievous, the apostle terms it σχόλοψ, which may denote 'a sharp stake.' He alludes to these trials (or part of them) in Gal. iv. 14, saying, 'My temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not.' Again, in 2 Cor. x. 10, 'His bodily presence,' say they, 'is weak, and his speech contemptible.' Now had this been all, it would have been comparatively little; but it appears that these outward trials proved spiritual ones too, and exposed him to the buffetings of Satan. Nay, they seemed like Satan's messenger to buffet him, as if Satan had so sent them, that he could not trace the Lord's hand in them.

Commentators have too lightly passed over this part of the apostle's testimony. A child of God is buffeted by Satan when Satan mocks him, and says, 'See how you are left under grievous infirmities, your joys embittered, your influence weakened, your usefulness impaired: plain proofs, all of them, that God loves you not, nor regards you.' No wonder that the apostle besought the Lord, over and over again, that the 'thorn,' and the harrowing temptations it led to, might depart from him. But the Lord replied, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' As if he had said, 'Look away from the thorn, and all it brings upon you. Look only to me. Consider not even your weakness, impatience, or rebellion, under the thorn; for on account of these things my grace is needful for you, and my grace I give you. The thorn so works that you feel wholly weak; and it is in the midst of this very weakness, that I will perfect my strength in you.' But oh, how effectual was this answer of Christ! It made Paul reply, Most gladly will I boast and glory in my thorn, for thus only Christ's power is present and rests upon me. Therefore I not only endure, but feel complacency in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; because in the very midst of them all, when I am most weak, Christ comes in; and even then I am made most strong.

All those who are the subjects of the true teaching of grace, will find in a measure the same faith and the same fruits of it in themselves. I may appeal to many whether they have not found that a state of ease, is *not* a state of spiritual clearness and spiritual

enjoyment? Nevertheless, so weak are we, that we cannot bear the ease to be broken up. But when many trials befall us which we cannot escape, nor yet easily bear, the spell is broken, the mist which covered spiritual realities is cleared. We can find our way to the throne of grace then, we can believe Christ's favour, and he becomes our Rock and our Refuge. This is exactly the same thing in substance that the apostle describes above: the degree of it is often far short of his; but may the Lord enable us to go from strength to strength.

XV.

On the divinity of Christ.

Colossians i. 15–18, 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.'

THERE is nothing more grateful to the redeemed of the Lord, than to praise and exalt Christ, as God over all, blessed for ever, Amen. (Rom. ix. 5.) This passage in Colossians is one among many, ascribing this glory to Christ most fully. Let every clause of it be interpreted according to the analogy of scripture, and this will be clearly seen. In that Paul says that Christ is 'the image of the invisible God,' he plainly refers to Christ's human nature. For as the Godhead is, in the above words, declared to be 'invisible,' the divine nature of Christ must be so also, or else it is not divine. And by calling Christ 'the image of God,' he means the very same which Christ himself says, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (John xiv. 9). In that he calls him, 'the firstborn of every creature,' he most plainly asserts that his Being was before all creatures. I believe also that the word 'firstborn' has relation to his being set forth as the Son from eternity. The same expression also may be rendered, The firstborn of the whole creation, as implying that he is 'heir of all things,' as he is called in Hebrews i. 1.

This 'firstborn,' in the two following verses (the 16th and 17th), is asserted to be the Creator of heaven and earth, of all things seen or unseen, of angelic powers, and of all worlds; nay further, that he is their end, as well as their author; himself before them all; and all things consisting, or being maintained, through his divine providence. This is that most glorious Person who (verse 18) is declared to be the head of all his chosen seed, his universal church: who is also the 'firstborn from the dead' (as having been one of the dead), and yet, he who liveth, and was dead; and, behold, he is alive for

evermore; and hath the keys of hell and of death (Rev. i. 18). We must say then of Christ, with the apostle John, 'This is the true God, and eternal life.'

It is remarkable that this title given to Christ, 'Firstborn of every creature,' is very often quoted by the early Fathers, as simply, and without question, meaning that Christ was before all creatures: not the first of them. Dr. Burton collects many such quotations in his Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the divinity of Christ: of which one of the most remarkable is in a letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Rome, A. D. 260; who, referring to such as would make out the Son to be a creature, says, Πρὸς οὓς καὶ εἶποι ἄν τις, Ὦ ῥιψοκίνδυνοι ἄνθρωποι, Ποίημα ὁ Πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως; 'To whom one might almost say, O fool-hardy men! Can the Firstborn of every creature be himself a creature?'

XVI.

Three senses in which believers are said to be dead.

Colossians iii. 3–5, 'For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members,' &c.

THERE are three several ways in which it may be said to believers, 'Ye are dead.' 1. When we have respect to the everlasting covenant of God in Christ, we say that believers have both died and risen again with Christ. This is a blessed death, which the Holy Ghost must lead us to know and believe to have passed upon us. 2. When we have respect to the fall of man, we say that believers, as others, are all by nature dead in sin, and are the dry bones spoken of by Ezekiel in his 37th chapter, who are quickened and brought to feel this death, saying, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.' 3. When we have respect to the corrupt principle which abides through life in the justified believer's person, this also is a body of death, causing extreme anguish and conflict, especially in all temptations.

Now in all these three deaths, the comfort is this, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God.' Let Christ be out of sight, and we only see and feel death; let Christ appear, though only spiritually and by faith, and all the death is swallowed up in life. When he shall once for all appear in glory, we shall appear with him. Now the entrance of these truths is the root, and the only root, of all true mortification of sin. 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.'

XVII.

The blessed man.

James i. 12–19, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life,' &c.

THE whole lifetime of the believer is his time of temptation; for during the whole course of it he is subject to manifold temptations: and so was Christ before him, who says to those who pass through this tribulation, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations' (Luke xxii. 28). Now the temptation named in the words of James, are both trials of faith and direct temptations to evil; for speaking of them further, he says, 'God cannot be tempted with evil, neither [so] tempteth he any man.' This intimates, what we truly find, that we are tempted with evil continually. Satan, as we know from the scriptures, is the principal agent in these temptations, inflaming and exciting the evil principles of our corrupt nature, till the holiest and the best cry out, O wretched men that we are! (Rom. vii. 24.) There is a dreadful descent from bad to worse, except the grace and mercy of God in Christ preserve us—for a man is 'drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' But thanks be to God, those who feel the bitterness of this sore danger and evil, and look out for deliverance therefrom, find it, through God in Christ. For Christ came to seek and to save these lost sinners. Hence arises the blessed truth stated in the beginning of these words, 'Blessed is the man who endureth temptation:' not who escapeth it, but who endureth it, who abideth under it. Even as the believer is blessed, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, as David says in Psalm xxxii, so is he blessed, when fleeing from sin, he is also fleeing to the Refuge which God hath set before him. In fact, these two characters unite in one. He who is harassed and tried by the temptations of the devil, till he cannot rest without the forgiveness of sins, is the person who, so fleeing, finds pardon and justification also, and becomes the blessed man here hailed by the apostle James.

He goes on to say with holy caution, 'Do not err, my beloved brethren;' as feeling that the right line here, and in all other points of practical divinity, is a line hard to hit. God is not the author of sin, but he is the fountain of grace. Flee from the temptation through confession of sin to Christ, and consider those good and perfect gifts which God in Christ is ever ready to bestow. He 'begat' those by 'his own will,' through 'the word of truth,' who groan for deliverance from sin; and he knoweth 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning:' therefore whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end; and, as he has already begun the work, he will certainly finish it.

XVIII.

The more sure word of prophecy.

2 Peter i. 16–21, especially verse 19, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.'

An infidel writer, referring to these words, has scornfully remarked that the apostle Peter recites in the beginning of them the miracle of Christ's transfiguration, and then calls prophecy a 'more sure' evidence of the truth of Christianity than one of its greatest miracles was. Now, adds he, prophecy affords at best but an obscure sort of evidence; and if miracles are more obscure still, the truth of Christianity is evidently uncertain, even by the allowance of one of its chief apostles.

This argument, as many have observed, appears a little plausible to an English reader of the text, but has no weight at all when the passage is read in the original. For the word translated 'more sure' might quite as naturally, and far more agreeably to the context, have been rendered 'more confirmed:' and if so rendered, it is plain that the apostle is not asserting that prophecy is more sure than miracles, but that prophecy has been confirmed and proved true by miracles, and so has become more worthy of our attention.

This is a very simple, but a very valuable criticism; not only sweeping away the cobwebs of infidelity, but also setting the whole reasoning of the apostle, to the end of the chapter, in a very clear and instructive light.

He says in the 15th and 16th verses, that he will endeavour we may be able after his decease to have the Christian doctrines always in remembrance. For he had not been inventing cunningly devised fables when he preached that Jesus was Christ the Lord, and testified his power, coming, and majesty, for, says he, I was an eye-witness of this glory myself;—I and others who 'were with him in the holy mount,' saw his glory, and heard the voice from heaven which said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

This glory of Christ, seen and heard, confirms the prophecies which went before on him. The prophecies declared that he would come, and that his glory and majesty were thus great; but now, his coming, glory, and majesty having been heard and seen, the truth of the prophecy is ratified. Henceforth the prophecy is more confirmed to us, and therefore of more value than formerly; and we shall 'do well' to take heed unto it, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts.

But there is one thing which must be felt and believed, before we can do well by taking heed to the prophecy; in other words, before we can find a blessing by attention to the Old Testament (for of this the apostle is speaking). We must first know, says Peter, 'that

no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,' of any private unfolding or unloosing. It cannot be unfolded, it is not at the command even of the prophet who spake it. For the ancient prophecy (the Old Testament) came not by man's will, but the writers of it spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and therefore their words cannot be unfolded, the sealed book cannot be loosed, except by God who gave it. These last two verses are therefore added to attest that no man, not even a prophet, can savingly understand the scriptures without the grace of him who inspired them. The apostle reverently believed this, and we must believe it too, if, as he would have us, we take heed to the confirmed word of prophecy.

It is further manifest that the apostle, in saying 'word of prophecy,' has not in his mind the whole collection of scripture prophecies, but the prophecy of Christ's coming and glory, which had been confirmed by its fulfilment; and the prophecy, as we may well call it, of salvation through faith in his name. These are the prophecies of deepest concern to us as long as we live upon earth. Compared with these all other prophecies are of small importance. Except these are the subjects of our most earnest desires and prayers, regard to other prophecies proves a husk without a kernel, and leaves us, like the foolish virgins, without oil in our vessels with our lamps. Therefore let us not only notice, but follow Peter in this, that he calls the prophecies of Christ and salvation through his name, the 'word of prophecy' emphatically, because of its incomparable importance. And now that Christ's coming, glory, death, and resurrection have taken place, this word is a more confirmed word, and so more important to us still. You do well, he proceeds, to take heed unto it; and take heed to it, 'knowing this first,' that you must beg for and find grace to understand it savingly. Moreover take heed unto it, as unto 'a light that shineth in a dark place.' The dark place is our hearts (the apostle says so presently); the light shining is the light of Christ in the word. It may be compared only to the light of a candle; but a candle in a dark place is of great use, though of none in broad daylight. David says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' This little light shows us that Christ has finished his work of redemption and entered into his glory, and whoever believes in him shall be saved. Do not despise this light. Make use of it as David does when he says, 'I wait for the Lord, . . . and in his word do I hope.' After a while you will find the breaking in of the morning; the day shall dawn, and 'the day star arise in your hearts,'—those dark hearts of ours. Nay further, as the word of prophecy says, 'Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.' But all this progress of blessedness is for those alone, who by grace take heed to the word, when shining only in the dark place.

XIX.

The Lord that bought them.

2 Peter ii. 1, 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.'

THE apostle here warns the church of Christ that these false teachers shall be, in profession, and partly at least in creed, Christians themselves. He not only says they shall be 'among you,' but from his adding they shall deny 'the Lord that bought them,' we are led to suppose that the doctrine of redemption, according to their own view of it, shall be one of their strong holds. While they boast of Christ as their Redeemer, they shall nevertheless deny him. He further testifies of them that they shall 'bring upon themselves swift destruction;' which shows that as they perish at last, they were none of Christ's sheep, for whom he laid down his life, from the first. That such as they should cause many to 'follow their pernicious ways,' as the apostle goes on to affirm, is fearful, but it is true; and a truth which is even yet in the course of fulfilment; and the thought of it will awaken deep searchings of heart, even in those who by the grace of God are no more members of this apostacy themselves, than those first apostles were, who upon Christ's saying, 'One of you shall betray me,' began every one of them to say, 'Lord is it I?' (Matt. xxvi. 21, 22.)

But does the apostle really affirm, respecting these wicked men, that Christ redeemed them by his most precious blood, because he admits that the Lord bought them? No, by no means. It is true, indeed, that all who were so redeemed were bought, and the price, Christ's blood, was inestimable; but the converse is by no means true that all who were bought were therefore so redeemed. I will show by an illustration how manifestly and simply true this is. A man may buy a field of standing corn; it is thenceforward his own; the tares and the wheat both: but who would say that he gave his gold for the tares? So the whole world became Christ's by purchase, but 'he gave himself'—his blood, a costly and effectual ransom for his people alone; the flock which his Father gave him. For these sheep he laid down his life; he loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify, cleanse, and glorify it. He was made sin, and the curse of the law, for these, that they 'might be made the righteousness of God in him.' He bought these with a price, and an inestimable price too. Does the apostle Peter here say that he gave such an inestimable price for these wicked men, who bring on themselves swift destruction? No. He only says that the Lord bought them. They are his property, and yet, instead of obeying him, they deny him. The whole argument is further cleared by observing the original word, here used for

'Lord.' It is a word but rarely applied to Christ; but whether applied to him, or in a general way to God, it has exclusive reference to his divine power and dominion, not to his character as a Saviour,—*καὶ τὸν ἀγοράσαντα αὐτοὺς δεσπότην ἀρνούμενοι*, 'even denying the Sovereign who bought them.' They belonged to him, and are subject to him, and yet they deny his authority: they are, in brief, those rebellious enemies who say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' of whom he will say, 'Bring them hither, and slay them before me.'

The distinction, here shown between being bought merely, and being bought with Christ's blood, is very important; because Christ's actual and efficacious redemption is the basis of every Christian's sure hope; and nothing is more important than our finding our calling and election to this privilege made sure, not in fancy, but in truth: as Job felt it when he said, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' and as Elihu felt it, when he describes the mercy of God to a humbled and convinced sinner, 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.'

XX.

On the epistle to Laodicea.

Revelations iii. 14–22, 'And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works,' &c.

THAT the seven churches in Asia addressed in Revelations ii and iii were churches where the apostle John had formerly exercised his ministry is probably true, and may suggest one reason for their being selected out of many other churches to be subjects of these addresses.

But the pains taken by many learned men to discover in these seven epistles a prophetical intimation of seven states of the church universal, from that date to the present, seems to me labour in vain; and the construction required for its proof unnatural and forced. But apart from every historical or prophetical allusion, the great advantage to be derived from spiritual meditation upon this part of scripture is most evident; nor can I doubt that the divine Author of these epistles intended to pourtray in them, the leading characteristics, good and bad, which he foreknew would be found in the religion of his people in all ages; that they might more expressly be enabled to discern between good and evil.

In this epistle to Laodicea, he denounces, with his utmost severity, the spirit of self-righteousness; so that his words may well stir us up to entreat deliverance from that deadly, but often unsuspected

sin, reigning in many whose religion is highly esteemed among men, and who actually mistake the pretensions of free-will and fleshly perfection, for the very beauty of holiness itself!

'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.' By calling himself the faithful and the true witness, he would have them assured that his testimony would be found true, though most opposite to the record they were bearing of themselves. By saying that he is the beginning of God's creation, he means that he is the first author of that creation. He goes on, 'I know thy works.' That is, he knew what their works proved them to be, for their words made them out to be full of zeal and godliness, whereas their works showed them to be neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. 'Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' That is, they boasted of their lively, zealous, and fruitful religion: how then could they be called lukewarm? Why, because their self-righteousness deadened all spiritual love in them. They saw not their deep obligation to Christ, and so were lukewarm towards him, though fervent enough in will-worship and fleshly zeal. 'I would thou wert either cold or hot.' To be strongly and deeply affected either as by heat or cold, is better than that Christless indifference in which we become lukewarm towards him. If any be fervent or hot with true love and zeal, this is good: if any be, as it were, frozen with deep and keen fears, and a sense of the hardness and coldness of their hearts, this also (as making Christ needful) is good, though in a lesser degree; but to be so full of self that Christ is neglected, this is the worst of all. Yet it is the condition of all flaming professors, who look to their religion to save them as saints, not to Christ to save them as sinners. 'So then because thou art lukewarm,' says the Lord, 'and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' The figure is an awful one, expressing his abhorrence of self-righteousness. His soul 'abhorred Israel' (Ps. lxxviii. 59). Yet, blessed be his name, he does not seal them to this condemnation; but stirs them up from their lukewarmness. 'Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' That is, thou art pleased with thy fancied merits. For these, in their own account, embraced both faith and works, everything that accompanies salvation; leaving them to slight feelings respecting Christ, though by no means to reject him in word; but the real truth respecting themselves and all others, they knew not. Thou 'knowest not that thou art (not once wast, but now art) wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' How wretched! being ignorant of the joy of Christ's grace. How miserable! being deceived and deluded in heart. How poor! because thy glittering gold is only sounding brass. How blind! because thinking you see and possess the gospel, you possess only a false gospel. How naked! because in this self-righteous state you see not the glory of Christ's imputed righteousness, much less attain to that heaven-born faith that puts it on.

When Christ has thus bruised them, beating down their sin with his 'rod of iron' (Ps. ii. 9), behold, how ready he is to raise them up again. If only, by his sovereign grace, he makes them as poor and needy, as he tells them they really are: for otherwise they will only wax prouder and prouder: then says he, 'I counsel thee,' or rather, as the word is, 'I take counsel with thee,'—I am come to thy succour in this day of thy calamity: come and let us reason together. 'Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed . . . and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.' How is it that he should first tell them they have no money, and then counsel them to come and buy? Because their very poverty, sin, and misery it is, which they are to bring, and to exchange it all for his gold, white raiment, and eye salve. He adds, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.' That is, I rebuke you because I love you: and for the same reason (i. e. because I love you) be zealous and repent: for except Christ thus first loved them, they could never, by true zeal and repentance, show they loved him. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock,' or rather, as the Greek is, 'I have been standing'—long enough—yet I still 'knock.' For those who are lukewarm towards Christ, neither heed his knocking, nor desire his company. But now, at last, the Lord's voice is 'mighty in operation' (Ps. xxix. 4, P. B. Version), and those who hear it will open to him at once. Every one who does so, shall find him. 'If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' As if the Lord said, I will come in and be his guest now; by and by he shall be mine.

The victory thus obtained over the pride and self-righteousness of nature, is great indeed; the faith which thus overcomes is truly of God. Therefore, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' Shall we not say, O the depths of the riches of his grace! The very same persons who, abiding in their pride, he threatens, in the 16th verse, to reject with abhorrence, being humbled, he will here exalt to his throne. Shall we not entreat him to grant us a spiritual ear? that so we may obey his closing injunction indeed, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'

THE END.